

A

**VINDICATION**

OF THE

**THOMSONIAN SYSTEM**

OF THE

PRACTICE OF MEDICINE

ON

**BOTANICAL PRINCIPLES,**

AS ORIGINATED BY SAMUEL THOMSON, AND CONTINUED  
BY HIS COADJUTORS.

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**BY JOHN THOMSON.**

"It is not the disease, but neglect of the remedy, which generally destroys life."

"Those who bestow but slight attention upon a subject, must form a trivial judgment of it."

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**1825.**



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"By what unaccountable perversity in our ~~time~~ me does it appear, that we set ourselves so much against any thing ~~that~~ is new? Can any one behold without scorn, such drones of physician~~s~~, that after the space of so many hundred years' experience and practice ~~of~~ their predecessors, not one single medicine has been detected, that has least force directly to prevent, to oppose, resist and expel a continued fever? Should any, by a more sedulous observation, pretend to make the least step towards the discovery of *SUCH* remedies, their hatred and envy would swell against him, as a legion of devils against virtue: the whole society will dart their malice at him, and torture him with all the calumnies imaginable, without sticking at any thing that should destroy him root and branch. *For he who professes to be a reformer of the art of physic, must resolve to run the hazard of the martyrdom of his reputation, life, and estate.*"

DR. HERVEY, *Discoverer of the Circulation of the Blood.*

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## PREFATORY ADDRESS.

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### TO THE PUBLIC.

*Friends and Fellow-Citizens,*

THE testimonials contained in the following pages are respectfully submitted to you, in proof of the propriety and utility of the botanical system of practice, as pursued by the subscriber and his coadjutors.

The use of *poisons* as medicines, has obtained such an ascendency in the public mind, that it will be considered the influence of enthusiasm or ignorance that should prompt an individual to *oppose* the practice, or *expose* its evil tendency. But let the consequence be what it may, being deeply impressed with the deleterious effects of such poisons on the human system, and conceiving it a bounden duty to express to the public my honest sentiments upon the subject, I am induced to lay the following documents, referring to my system, before it. They speak a language which can neither be misunderstood nor evaded. They speak of circumstances which have transpired within the recollection of all, and of facts which can be attested to by hundreds of witnesses.

It is now about fourteen months since I first came to the city of Albany to practice Botany. I might have published specimens of my practice long ere this, that the public might have judged of its utility, had it not been for a series of shameful persecution which I have encountered from my opponents. But I have thought it expedient to remain silent, excepting in one or two instances, when attacks were made on my brother, who practices on the same system; and as he was not here to answer for himself, I thought it my duty to speak in his behalf. Our remedies are of the same kind, and, of course, one is equally injurious or beneficial with the other.

When I had been in this city forty days, I had administered relief to many, in whose cases the medicines prescribed by regular physicians had entirely failed.—

This seems to have had a powerful effect on the physicians; whether it was an alarm for the profits of their practice, or for the public weal, is left for the reader to judge. Be that as it may, so great was this effect, that one of them (probably by the direction of the rest) wrote me a letter, warning me to leave the city, or expect a prosecution; which this tool, as I afterwards found him to be, said would otherwise be commenced against me. However, I did not see fit to comply with this modest request, and yet have escaped prosecution to this day.— They did not profess to find any fault with my practice, but the reason assigned was, that I had not entered my diploma in the office of the County Clerk, agreeably to law. In my reply to this letter I informed them that my system of practice was secured to my father by *patent*, and I, as his heir, claimed it as heritage property, and as an Agent, sought protection under that patent. But judge of my astonishment when this learned man informed me, (for the first time that I ever heard of it,) that whatever privileges might have been given to my father, "could not be entailed on his children." Verily, this was the first time that I ever was told that a parent had not the privilege of giving his property to his children, if he thought proper to do so! Several other pompous things were said by this man of Esculapian lore, which I shall not trouble my readers by repeating to them.

It is unnecessary for me to say much in regard to my system of practice, as enough has already been said by physicians of the first talent in the United States. The reader is particularly referred to "AN ECCLECTIC," in this book, written by a celebrated physician of Boston, formerly Lecturer on Materia Medica, in Cambridge College. His comments were originally published in the Boston Patriot, from which paper they are copied.— The reader is also referred to the certificate from Dr. William Ingalls of Boston, and to a letter from the celebrated Dr. S\*\*\*\*\* L. M\*\*\*\*\* of the city of New-York, and also one from Dr. David Morrill, of Union Village, Ohio. Their competency to form correct views of the subject, will appear by their own statements of them.—

Should those gentlemen's opinions prove insufficient to produce conviction, (of which I do not see how they can possibly fail, for their medicines, when they were in practice, were minerals, and such as I now speak against,) we will then let experience speak for herself, and refer to the certificates of reputable inhabitants of this city, in the latter part of the pamphlet. Should *these* not be satisfactory, the street and No. is affixed to each certificate, together with the person's name, on whom the unbelieving may call and be satisfied by verbal testimony. This is surely as far as I can be required to go to satisfy the hardened in error, and the bigotted and prejudiced part of the community, against my system. I trust, however, from the very liberal patronage and kindnesses which I have received from the inhabitants of this truly hospitable, generous and enlightened city, and which have been greater than I could reasonably have anticipated, both in my private and professional character, (for which I return them my warmest acknowledgments,) that I have here produced evidence sufficient to satisfy the most obdurate of my opponents of the efficacy of my system.

It is true I have been persecuted since my arrival in this city, together with my brother, who resides in Geddesburgh, with a relentless ardour, which would be more commendable in a better cause, but which, in the present case, I cannot but look upon as a shameful dereliction from the principles of charity, and disgraceful to humanity. My brother's practice has been very extensive, and so extraordinarily successful that he has lost but six cases out of *one thousand two hundred and fifty*, as I am informed by a record of his practice, in four years and a half. *Five* of the unsuccessful cases were such as were given over as incurable by the regular physicians; and yet, what think you, honest reader, when I inform you that through the envy and malice of the Doctors, he has been *indicted* at various times for the *murder* of *three* of those patients! But as yet they never have dared to bring him to trial.

In Geddesburgh, there is a man who is styled a regular physician, and who in twelve months has lost *eight*

patients. It was allowed that my brother had the greatest part of the business of the village, and in the same time lost but ONE patient. Notwithstanding this vast difference of success in favour of my brother's practice, this man of Mercury tried very hard to make the people believe that my brother had murdered his *one*, because he did not kill it in as fashionable a style as he had despatched his *eight*.

If my brother had been guilty of treating his patients in the manner described in the *ferocious Geneva Palladium*, he is worse than a murderer, and ought to be treated as the law directs in such cases; but mark the cautious introductory remark with which he commences his article. It is to this effect: "The following case was related to us by a respectable *physician*." This brief remark is a sufficient interpretation to the whole matter. Since the appearance of those publications, I have taken particular pains to investigate these reports, and have invariably found it to be the case that the patients had been given over to die by the regular physicians, before my brother saw them. One case was given over by *thirteen*, and another by *four*. Under these circumstances, it is submitted to the public, whether any dependence can be placed on the candour or veracity of these country physicians or their ranting organ, the editor of the *Palladium*. We may as well expect fire to freeze, or water to burn, as to hear one of them speak in favor of Thomson or his system of practice. The unprecedented success which has attended this system is such as to have alarmed the Doctors, as they find it is becoming more popular every day.

To elucidate the charitable and ingenuous manner in which I am opposed by the physicians of this city, it is only necessary to state that should I be so fortunate as to effect the cure of a patient who had been given over by them to die, they immediately report that the patient was fast getting well before I was called upon, under their attendance, and that what medicine I had given was *of so simple a nature, that it could neither do good nor hurt*. But as soon as I lost a patient, I was immediately cried down as a "quack," "murderer," &c. and it

was said that the death of the patient was in consequence of my making use of *such powerful medicines!* Such rare consistency and fair dealing will doubtless have its *proper* weight with a discerning community. And with them I am willing to rest the subject.

But mark the difference between these physicians and those eminent philosophers and philanthropists, the celebrated Doctors RUSH and BARTON, who were ever zealous and unceasing in their endeavors to promote whatever they conceived to be in the least beneficial to mankind, no matter from what source it may have originated. Under the influence of this principle, both of these gentlemen examined my father's system of practice; and when they found it had reason and philosophy for its basis, agreed to render him all the assistance in their power for its promulgation. My father then returned to New-Hampshire, and soon after both of these patrons of science died, and thus he was deprived of their extensive influence.

The Geneva editor, among other things, says, that "these Botanical Doctors are becoming as thick as locusts, and the people are ignorant (he should have said independent) enough to employ them." The truth is, people in general are simple enough to employ those who have relieved their friends, their neighbors or themselves, the most speedily, efficaciously, and with the least expense, without making a long sickness of some trifling complaint that might have been removed in its first stages by a dose of simple tea drink, for the sake of swelling out an enormous bill, and robbing the patients of their money, as in cases which we but too frequently witness. He seems to talk as if the people ought not to be their own judges in selecting the individual to administer relief to their distresses.

When I first came to this city, and commenced a successful course of practice, I often applied *steam* in cases of obstructed perspiration, and when rightly applied it opens the pores and produces an agreeably warm glow through the whole system, to the comfort of the patient and the probable overthrow of the disease. And had I been a savage from the wilderness, going about seeking

whom I might destroy, instead of alleviating the sufferings of my fellow beings, my opponents could not have made use of much worse language against me. It was said that I *steamed* my patients *to death*, and destroyed them in divers other equally ridiculous ways. But mark, reader, the wonderful, the astonishing, the magical effect of a *name*, in converting this powerful combination of the elements, from a dark, malignant, horrible spirit of death and destruction, to a benign cherub of life, of health and of happiness! The name of the "*Albany MEDICATED VAPOUR BATH,*" which is the new fashioned name for STEAM, among us, has taken from it all its ferocious and deadly qualities, and rendered it the choicest favorite of those identical physicians who a few days since, when it was only found in the simple annals of Thomson's practice, denounced it as arrant quackery and the awful engine of "murder most foul!" In the hands of regular physicians it is loudly proclaimed a specific for almost every complaint, while in the hands of its original advocate it was the very quintessence of all evil! What a misfortune to me, that I could not have discovered and applied this useful, this all-powerful name, before!

In addition to the contumely which has in various ways been heaped upon me by these regular physicians, they have styled me a "Steam Doctor," "Quack," "Murderer," &c. Now if I have merited these epithets, while I have been performing cures upon patients whom they had given over to die, what term will be most suitable for them since they have adopted a portion of my practice?

A few days since a lady was taken very ill. A doctor was employed who attended her some time, but she still continued to grow worse, and to use the language of the husband, "his medicine was fast hurrying her to the grave." He sent for another, whose medicine had a rather more salutary effect, though it did not remove the cause. The husband, not willing to limit his exertions to save his wife, applied to a third, who refused to go, for, said he, "three Doctors are enough to kill a woman at any time." He certainly spoke more truth than he was aware of; and if three will kill, each one must bear

a third part in the transaction. It is my belief, that if medicines have a tendency to kill, they never will heal; or, in other words, that an instrument of death cannot be tortured into an instrument of life.

Physicians, when called upon to attend a sick person, should endeavour to assist nature to throw off the disease instead of giving him medicines that are treated in his stomach as a common enemy, which nature is obliged to struggle as hard with to throw off, as she does with the disease. This principle of giving a medicine to cure a sick person, which would kill a healthy one, I could never reconcile with philosophy, reason, or common sense.

I will now advert to the qualities which I think medicine should possess, in order to remove disease and restore the patient to health, after referring to the essential component parts of the human system. We find man to be composed of the four elements. Earth and water are the solids, and air and fire the fluids. The two first of them are the component parts, and the two last keep him in motion. Heat is life, and cold is death.—All constitutions are alike, excepting in regard to their comparative strength. It is by keeping these elements in a proper temperature that we enjoy good health. It is a deficiency of this vital heat, or life, that causes disease. As soon as this heat partially absents itself, the vacancy is filled with cold. The remaining warmth struggles to throw it off, and produces a coat, canker, or fever, on the stomach and tongue. And as our extremities receive their support from the stomach, through the glands or conductors, this coat becomes drawn in, and obstructs those organs of the stomach. This is generally called "obstructed perspiration," because the conductors which convey moisture and nourishment from the stomach are completely stopped. Then the effects are seen. The patient grows hot, or feverish and dry; his flesh wastes away; the surface or skin begins to die or turn pale; and in fact the whole machine is out of order; the gastric juices and gall are continually augmenting in the stomach; the stomach becomes sour, and many times the heart-burn, and other complaints, set in, and costive-

ness, or inactivity of the bowels, follows; and unless these obstructions are removed, the patient will languish and die. The question is, how is this to be effected?—First, give medicines to restore the deficiency of heat—Second, a medicine to take the coat or canker from the glands—Third, take an active emetic to throw the whole mass from the stomach—Fourth, take bitters to restore the gall, which has become torpid and weak, in proportion to the rest of the system. When this is done, the patient is clear of fever, and is well in every respect, excepting the debility which the disorder may have produced.

In time of disease, nature requires a powerful assistant to aid her in throwing off the malady, and one that will not prove an enemy to her, when she most stands in need of a friend. If the remedy is an innocent one, if it can do no good, it remains silent, and produces no bad effect. This is the case with all the medicine I make use of. It will never do harm, if it does no good; but I do not promise that it will invariably prove efficacious; for there are doubtless many cases where diseases are so situated as to place their cure beyond the reach of human power.

But let the reader observe the difference between botanical, or active medicine, and mineral, or inactive ones. We will suppose a person to be severely attacked with bilious cholic, and has cold chills, with severe pains, which are a sure indication that the system is powerfully attacked by her great enemy, the cold—that the vital spark is materially reduced, and brought into a state of inactivity—in a word, it is bent *deathwards*. What shall we do? Shall we give medicine that will assist nature in throwing off the disease? Or shall we administer such medicine as she must be compelled to throw off *with* the disease, and that with a double exertion, if she should prove strong enough? If, being much weakened by the disease, she does not prove strong enough, she must inevitably fall under it. Hear and reflect on what the physicians frequently say, that such or such a poor patient has so many doses of physic, or calomel, in them; and if that cannot be removed, *they must die*. So, if the

disease does not kill the patient, the remedy must ! God forbid that I should ever be guilty of using *such medicines* ! We are complete machines, and the Doctor *should be* the repairer. His remedies should be such as to keep the elements in a proper temperature, or the machine in such repair as to wear out only with old age. The remedies we ought to apply are such as will restore the delinquent element or power, and while restoring that, to neither destroy nor derange any other part of the machinery, as we know calomel and other minerals will. Food and medicine should harmonize with each other. The latter is to prepare the stomach for the reception of the former, and consequently they should agree. When the patient is taking medicine, then is the time the appetite should be satisfied, in order to nourish the system, and thus assist nature in conjunction with the medicine, to conquer the disease ; and if your medicine is congenial to nature, the food you take to satisfy the appetite, will never distress you. The simple reason why a person is compelled to *diet*, while taking calomel, and other minerals, is, that the digestive organs become, in a measure, useless or inactive, or are deadened so much, that when the pangs of hunger call, and are imprudently satisfied, it has frequently cost the patient his life.

Let us, therefore, study nature, and endeavor to see what she most requires. Every man who has a hundred acres of land, has remedies sufficient thereon to cure all the diseases which he will ever be liable to, that are curable. And, reader, this medicine is innocent, and is that which the God of nature has provided and intended for the cure of the maladies with which frail humanity is afflicted. Let us, then, try the virtues of Vegetable Medicine, and learn to doctor ourselves, without being beholden to Botanical Doctors, Apothecary Doctors, or Doctors of any other description. Remember the words of holy writ, to this effect : "The Lord hath created medicines out of the earth, and he that is wise will not abhor them." If you do this, candid reader, you will save yourself much pain, distress and vexation, (for I candidly believe that it is as easy to relieve our diseases, in their first stages, as it is our hunger,) besides enrich-

ing yourself by retaining the money which you will otherwise squander in Doctor's bills, loss of time, and many other disadvantages which you will have to encounter. That the happy era may soon arrive, when this doctrine will be adopted, both in theory and practice, is the ardent wish of the public's humble servant.

JOHN THOMSON

*Albany, December 10, 1825.*



The following letter is from a respectable gentleman of Boston, enclosing six Nos. of the Boston Patriot, containing the Nos. of "*An Ecclectic*," which follow.

BOSTON, Nov. 4th, 1825.

*Dear Sir,*

I received yours of the 28th of October. I send you, by mail, six Nos. of the Boston Patriot, containing six numbers of "AN ECCLECTIC." They were written by Dr. W\*\*\*\*\*\*, one of our oldest and most eminent physicians, formerly lecturer on Materia Medica in the College at Cambridge. Though I am not at liberty to make use of his name publicly, you may use what I have said of him, omitting his name. Dr. I\*\*\*\*\* has published nothing about the practice, but has purchased a family right, and is very friendly to your father, and the cause.

THE ECCLECTIC—No. I.

## SAMUEL THOMSON,

"BOTANIST," AND PATENTED PRACTITIONER OF MEDICINE.

MESSRS. EDITORS,

I have lately read with considerable interest and some surprise, a little volume of nearly 200 pages, entitled, "*A Narrative of the Life and Medical Discoveries of SAMUEL THOMSON, containing an account of his system of practice, and the MANNER of curing disease, with VEGETABLE medicines, upon A PLAN ENTIRELY NEW;*" to which is added his "*New Guide to Health, containing the PRINCIPLES upon which the system is founded.*"

While reading the book, I said to those who recommended it to my perusal, this man is no "QUACK." He narrates his medical discoveries, gives an account of his system of practice, together with his manner of curing diseases, upon a plan confessedly new; to which he adds the principles on which his new system is founded. He who does this is no *Charlatan*, but by uniting theory to his practice, however erroneous the theory, merits attention. With these ideas of the cultivation and promulgation of human knowledge, I read the narrative of Samuel Thomson, and soon perceived that he was a man of good capacity, persevering temper and benevolent disposition; and that he acquired his knowledge of the hitherto unknown virtues of certain plants, by experiments, first on himself, then on those about him. In the course of 20 or 30 years, he arranged his experimental knowledge into a system, as did the father of Physick before him, however imperfect; and having done this to the best of his power (for he had no literary education) he published the result of his experience, labour and thoughts to the world, for them to judge of it, and of him.

AUTO-BIOGRAPHY, is a profitable species of writing to the world, but dangerous to the writer himself, especially if he be a professional man or a political partisan; before he can gain credit for one honourable motive, every

sinister object that can be imagined will be laid to his account. Who among his competitors will exercise that impartiality on hearing his story, which they require of him in relating it? Narrow minded jealousy will pervert every thing. We may allow for a little high colouring in controversy with rivals, very few Physicians or Divines are free from it; but if Samuel Thomson in the narrative of his life has not turned aside from facts, he has been unjustly treated, and, in some instances, most cruelly persecuted. He has given names, dates, places and events, and spoken of judges, juries, sheriffs, jailors and witnesses, in a style so plain as to exclude all equivocation; and the same of a noted preacher. If what he has said of them be false, he ought to be exposed and publicly punished; if true, he merits protection. His discoveries are valuable or insignificant, his practice a nuisance or a benefit, his writings useful or a tassel of lies and calumnies, his *Patent* honourable or a disgrace to our government; and it is not beneath the dignity of any Physician, Divine, or Philosopher, to inquire into the truth of a series of experiments published with so much confidence, and purporting to be for the benefit of mankind.

I have no doubt but that Samuel Thomson has added a very valuable article to our *Materia Medica*, and that he has again and again relieved the sick where others have failed. From all that I can collect, I am induced to believe that he is not an avaricious man, but one who is more flattered by his success in relieving the sick than in receiving their money. This at least entitles him to a fair and patient hearing. It is possible he may have deceived himself; but it does not appear that he has laid himself out, like a conjurer, to deceive others. If this man has devoted the greater part of his life, to the relief of his fellow men, his labours claim respect and his errors our indulgence; for who of us are free from them? Let the unprejudiced man who reads his *narrative* and "*guide to health,*" judge for himself; and should he boggle at his theory of *heat* and *cold*, let him remember that Thomson, without knowing it, has adopted a theory of GALEN's; and his idea of the preserving power of na-

ture, the curer of diseases and preserver of life, appears to be the same as that acknowledged by HIPPOCRATES; but the writer could not express it in Greek.

Thomson is not a *Quack*, if by quack we mean a vain, artful, tricking practitioner in physic. He is an *Experimentor* who accumulates knowledge by his *own experience*. There was a sect among the ancients who assumed that appellation, to distinguish themselves from *Dogmatists*, who instead of experience taught dogmas. If Samuel Thomson be a quack, he is a quack *suigeneris*, for being an enemy to concealment, he tells all he knows, in as plain a manner as he possibly can, and leaves you to form your own judgment; provided you divest yourself of the *fashion* of this world in physic, which, with priestcraft, is fast passing away.

Read his book, men of New-England, and after making due allowance for his condition and situation and provocations, judge whether such a man merits the *persecution* he has endured, and the treatment he has met with.

### AN ECCLECTIC.



### THE ECCLECTIC—No. II.

*Being a discussion of AMERICAN rights and privileges, as it regards the PRACTICE OF MEDICINE, and the rights of discovery.*

It was insinuated in our first number, that it was a most cruel species of calumny to accuse a man publicly of *homicide*, because he had introduced a new mode of practice, without having had a regular or fashionable course of education, and because his *materia medica* contained articles unknown to the colleges.

A “*quack*” is a cunning, tricking fellow, who mixes up drugs in a disguised form, keeps the component articles secret, and advertises them as certain remedies for almost every disorder. But this is not the way of SAMUEL THOMSON; he tells you fairly his discoveries in the vegetable kingdom, describes the external appearance of

each plant, that you may recognise them while growing, and recounts their medical virtues as far as he is acquainted with them from his own experience. He goes further, and tells you how to compound them, and cautions you against such mixtures of them as would destroy their original specific qualities, which knowledge is natural chemistry; and informs you of the doses safe and proper to be given, all of which must have been the result of his own patient observation and judgment. Yet has this lonely man of experience, alias EMPIRICK, been not only persecuted by many of the faculty, in a manner disgraceful to the profession, but absolutely carried *hand-cuffed* to a dungeon at Newburyport, as a murderer!

After relieving the sick, by his new and peculiar means, to the comfort and surprise and joy of many, he has been deprived in several instances of his just reward, because he was not a *regular* physician, but learnt his business, as did the greatest statuaries and painters, from NATURE, and not by following the *capricious rules* of man. This treatment led him, at length, to seek redress in the laws of the land made and provided for "*encouragement of learning,*" and which in a measure secures to inventors and discoverers their due rights and privileges. It appears from Thomson's writings, and we form our opinions from them alone, that he obtained his PATENT by first petitioning the Hon. John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State, and then underwent a close investigation by Dr. Wm. Thornton, superintendent of the patent office, who is a physician distinguished for his learning and talents; after which his letters patent was signed by the wise and wary President Monroe.

I have read the schedule containing the specifications referred to in the Letter patent, and here transcribe the description of his principal article, viz. the *Lobelia Inflata*, which is a *biennial* plant, growing about 12 or 15 inches high, with leaves the size of mint, and pods the size of a white bean, containing very small seeds. In rich soils and shady places it sometimes grows twice that height. It may be found in the first stages of its growth at all times through the summer, from the size of a 6 cent piece to the bigness of a dollar.

and even larger, lying flat on the ground, like a rose pressed down, in order that it might bear the weight of snow which usually lays upon it during winter. In the spring it is yellow and pale, but when the returning sun spreads forth its enlivening rays, it lifts up its leaves and shoots forth a stalk the height of 12 or 15 inches, with a number of branches, bearing up its leaves with its growth; and sometimes in rich soils and shady places it attains twice its ordinary size. In July it puts forth small pointed, pale, blue blossoms, which is followed by small pods.—This pod is an exact resemblance of the human stomach, having an inlet, (the *cardia*,) and the outlet (*pylorus*) higher than the middle, from the first it receives its nourishment, and by the outlet discharges its seeds. It comes to maturity about the first of September, when the leaves and pods turn yellowish. This is the best time to gather it. It is what is called by botanists, a *biennial* plant, having only *two years* existence.

The *Lobelia Inflata* is a plant common to all parts of this country, [New-England.] Wherever the land is fertile enough to yield support for its inhabitants, it may be found. It is confined to no soil that is fit for cultivation, from the highest mountains to the lowest vallies. In hot and *wet* seasons it is the most plenty on dry and warm lands—in hot and *dry* seasons, on clayey and heavy lands. When the season is cold, whether wet or dry, it rarely makes its appearance; and if the summer and autumn be very dry, the seed does not come up—of course very little will be found the next season. I have been in search of this herb from Boston to Canada, and was not able to collect more than two pounds of it, and in some seasons I have not been able to collect any. This was the case in the year 1807.

This plant is different in one very important particular, from all others that I have knowledge of, viz. *the same quantity will produce the same effect in all stages of its growth*, from its first appearance till it comes to maturity. But the best time for gathering it is when the leaves and the pods begin to turn yellow, for then the seeds are ripe, and you have all that there can

be of this valuable plant. It should now be cut and spread out in a large airy room and kept clean, and sheltered from a damp atmosphere in the night. When perfectly dry, shake out the fine seeds, and pick off the leaves and the pods, and preserve them separate.

This herb is prepared for use in three different ways.  
 1st. that of the leaves and pods in the form of *powder*.  
 2d. that of a *spirituous tincture*, made from the green herb.  
 and 3dly. the *seeds* reduced to a fine powder, and used as hereafter to be mentioned. Then Thomson details the particular management of each of these three heads, and that in a judicious and prudent manner. He makes one remark on the compiler of the American Dispensatory which we shall quote as a specimen of the "EMPIRICK's" shrewdness, previously reminding our readers of the vague measure of a *teaspoonful*, a new fashioned Boston teaspoon holding, perhaps, twice the quantity of the old fashioned teaspoons in the country—"Dr. Thacher," says he, "undertakes to make it appear, that the fatal effects he tells about its producing, was owing to the quantity given, and says, that I administered a *teaspoonful* of the powder; and when he comes to give directions himself for using it, (*the emetic weed*) says, that from 10 to 20 grains may be given with safety. It appears strange that *different terms* should produce such *different effects*, in the *operation* of a medicine: if a *teaspoonful* (containing 20 grains) be given by an *Empirick*, its effects are *fatal*; but if the *same quantity* is administered by a *learned Doctor*, and called *grains*, it is an useful medicine!!"

SAMUEL THOMSON has made some other remarks on the chemical parts of the American Dispensatory, enough to shew that the country "Quack" is a pretty good match for any *Pharmacopola*. Retorts seldom do service where the lives and the characters of men are concerned. Dr. Thacher, under the head of *Lobelia*, has said sufficient to injure the character of any medical man of equivocal reputation, yet it comes not up to the bitterness and unfairness of another *medical* and *botanical* publication, namely, that by Dr. Jacob Bigelow, *Rumford Professor and Lecturer on Materia Medica and Botany in Harvard University*.

A critical review and examination of the article entitled *LOBELIA INFLATA*, in the first volume of that work, must be reserved for a future number. In the meantime, if any Botanist or Physician, or traveller, has had a knowledge of the *Lobelia Inflata*, beside the very short description by *Linnaeus*, with its medicinal virtues and uses in asthma and other diseases, prior to the year 1800, he would render a service to philosophy and morals by communicating it through the medium of some newspaper.

## AN ECCLECTIC.



## THE ECCLECTIC—No. III.

In Dr. Jacob Bigelow's "AMERICAN MEDICAL BOTANY," Vol. 1. p. 177, there is a coloured engraving of the *Lobelia Inflata*, or *Indian Tobacco*, followed by a pretty singular account of this powerful *emetic weed*. The article closes thus, MEDICAL REFERENCES.

CUTLER, Mem. Amer. Acad. 1. 484.—Schäpf. 123.—Bart. col. 36. 56.—THACHER, Disp. 267. *Massachusetts Reports*, Vol. VI.

In turning to the Rev. Manasseh Cutler's account of some of the vegetable productions growing in this part of America, written in January, 1784, we find LINNÆUS' description of it in four lines. Dr. Cutler denominates it "*American pride*," or *emetic weed*, and says that its blossoms are *scarlet*, and that it is found on the borders of brooks and rivers. In the same page he says the blossoms are *pale blue*, and that it grows in dry fields.

As to its sensible qualities he says, if "the leaves be chewed in the mouth, they are first insipid, but soon become pungent, occasioning a copious discharge of saliva. If they are held in the mouth for some time, they produce giddiness and pain in the head, with a trembling agitation of the whole body; at length they bring an extreme nausea and vomiting. The taste resembles that of *tartar emetic*—a plant possessed of such active properties, notwithstanding the violent effects from chewing the leaves, *may possibly become a valuable medicine.*"

Hence it appears that the *Lobelia*, or *emetic weed* was then unknown (1784) as a medicine, to a learned gentleman, distinguished for his botanical researches. In turning to Dr. Thacher's Dispensatory, we find it described as an *annual*, and so says Dr. Bigelow; but Samuel Thomson says in his specification, deposited in the office of State, that it is a *biennial*. "When learned Doctors disagree who shall decide? We answer EXPERIENCE; whether through *Samuel Thomson* or *Manasseh Cutler* matters not, though neither of them were regularly bred to physic. It does not appear that the compiler of the Dispensatory had any experience in the article. He says—it is probably one of the most powerful vegetable substances with which we are acquainted; and no rational practitioner will have recourse to it, but with the greatest precaution. The melancholy consequences resulting from the use of the *lobelia inflata*, as lately administered by the adventurous hands of a noted Empiric, have justly excited considerable interest, and furnished alarming examples of its *deleterious* properties, [i. e. *deadly, destructive, poisonous qualities*] and fatal effects. The dose in which he is said to prescribe it, and frequently with impunity, is a common teaspoonful of the powdered seeds or leaves, and often repeated. If the medicine does not puke or evacuate powerfully, it *frequently* destroys the patient, and sometimes in five or six hours." Thomson's own account contradicts this. He declares that he has given 30 grains of it again and again with perfect safety and great advantage. A physician in Boston, second to none in this city, assures the writer that he has given more than 40 grains of it, to his entire satisfaction, and that he was led to the use of it from his confidence in Dr. Thomson, whom he esteemed for his indefatigable researches, and his candor in communicating his experience.

Dr. Thacher says—"The following highly interesting observations have been recently received from the Rev. Dr. M. Cutler;" who gives his own personal experience of the efficacy of lobelia in asthma—he having been long afflicted with that distressing disorder. Now, as Parson Cutler, though a sensible man, was no physician, his au-

thority is no better than Thomson's, if so good; and my reason for saying so is this: Dr. Drury, of Marblehead, who was also an asthmatic, and who was entirely cured by the use of the lobelia, communicated his knowledge of the remedy to the Rev. Dr. Cutler, who communicated it to the compiler of the New Dispensatory, and he to the author of the *American Medical Botany*; but the original use of lobelia in the cure of asthma, may be traced from Dr. Drury up to Samuel Thomson, Dr. Thacher's "noted Empiric," and Dr. Bigelow's "legitimate HOMICIDE."

It therefore appears from consulting the writings of *Samuel Thomson, Manasseh Cutler, James Thacher and Jacob Bigelow*, that the knowledge of the medicinal qualities of lobelia was first known and used by the first named practitioner, and that he, *Thomson*, administered it to the wife of Ephraim Coleman, in the year 1808, with complete success in asthma. (See Coleman's certificate, p. 182 of the narrative of the life and medical discoveries of *Samuel Thomson*.)

It would seem from all that we can discover that the knowledge of the powerful effects of the *lobelia* or *emetic weed*, had floated on the breath of the people as derived from Thomson, until he grew up a man, when he determined to administer it for the relief of his fellow men.— He began on himself, and having obtained signal relief from severe bodily sufferings by the use of it, he adds very happily—"This accidental remedy was found through NECESSITY; and was the first time the MOTHER OF INVENTION held forth her hand to me."

The question now is, whether Thomson deceived himself, or whether he aimed to deceive others? Samuel Thomson has as much right to be heard as either of the gentlemen before mentioned, and his character stands as fair, where he is best known.

He says, in p. 206, of his *New Guide to Health*, that the first knowledge he ever had of the *Lobelia Inflata* was obtained by accident, more than forty years ago, and says he—"I never had any information whatever concerning it, except what I have gained by my own experience.— A great deal has been said of late about this plant, both

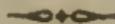
in favor of it and against its utility in medicine; but all that the faculty have said concerning it, only shews their ignorance of the subject, there being but little truth in what they have stated concerning its medicinal properties, except wherein they have admitted it to be a certain cure for the asthma. It is a truth which cannot be disputed, that all they have known about this article and the experiments that have been made to ascertain its value, originated in my making use of it in my practice. There is no mention made of this herb by any author, that I have been able to find, previous to my discovering it, excepting what is said by Linnæus, who has given a correct description of it under the name of *Lobelia Inflata*, but says nothing of its medical properties. It is therefore reasonable to conclude, that they were not known until I discovered them, and proved them to be useful. When the faculty first made the discovery that I used the emetic herb in my practice, they declared it to be a *deadly poison*, and while they were persecuting me by every means in their power, and representing to the world that I killed my patients with it, they were very ready to call it, "*Thomson's Medicine*"; but since they have found it about to become an article of great value, an attempt seems to be making to rob me of the credit of it; in which some, who have been introduced by me, are ready to join, for the purpose of promoting their own interest at my expense."

Samuel Thomson then comments on what Dr. Thacher has said of him and his practice in his Dispensatory, and contradicts a greater part of it, and points out some inconsistencies and contradictions in it. But we do not wish to repeat it. Thomson remarks in p. 208, that—what is quoted in the Dispensatory from the Rev. Dr M. Cutler, concerning the *Lobelia* is, in general correct, particularly as it regards its use in asthma, but that he is mistaken as to its effects on the stomach and bowels, that its operation is entirely different from all other known emetics; and that he has learnt this from having administered it in every form and manner for a long series of years. He makes this bold assertion, that all the knowledge that Dr. Cutler had acquired of this herb in the

asthma must have been derived from him. This must depend on dates, names and facts. Our "*noted Empiric*" goes on to observe that "it is said by Thacher, that it was employed by the aborigines and by those who deal in Indian remedies, and by those who are attempting to rob me of the discovery *affect* to believe it: but this is founded altogether on *conjecture*, for they cannot produce a single instance of its having been employed as a medicine before I made use of it; and he adds that the best evidence of its being an entirely new article is, the ignorance of the faculty of its powers."\*

Samuel Thomson has been privately and publicly accused and prosecuted for using *poisonous* articles in his practice. The subject will be discussed in our next number.

#### AN ECCLECTIC.



#### THE ECCLECTIC—No. IV.

SAMUEL THOMSON has been accused by certain physicians of giving *poisons* as remedies for diseases, and one more violent than the rest, caused him to be indicted in the county of Essex, "for the wilful murder of Ezra Lovett, Jr. by giving him a poison called *Lobelia*, of which he died next day." The jury, however, *promptly* acquitted him.

In reply to the horrid accusation of *Murder*, by using *poisonous* drugs, Thomson quotes from Thacher's New Dispensatory, where his practice is very seriously denounced, the article *muriate of mercury*, or *corrosive sublimate*, which is spoken of as one of "the most violent of poisons;" yet used by every physician *internally*. He next transcribes the article *oxyd of arsenic*, which Dr. Thacher says *is one of the most sudden and violent poisons we are acquainted with*, and yet given *inwardly* by every practitioner of extensive business! Thacher's words are—"such are the powers of this MEDICINE, (namely RATSBAKE) that two grains of it are often suffi-

\* We have given every where Thomson's own words, excepting where the grammar and redundant phraseology required a little variation.

cient to cure an intermittent fever that has continued for weeks." He even speaks of it as safe to be given to children! He tells his readers that the late Dr. Barton of Philadelphia, combined one grain of arsenic with 4 to 8 grains of opium made into a mass of pills with conserve of roses and honey, and this to be divided into sixteen pills, of which two or three are to be taken at different periods of the day and night in intermittent fevers! (See p. 301, 3d edition of the *new Dispensatory*.)

But Thomson did not leave the matter there, but quoted from the same article, viz. *oxidum arsenici*, of Thacher's Dispensatory the following tough paragraph.

"The fumes of arsenic are so deleterious to the lungs that the artist ought to be on his guard, to prevent their being inhaled by his mouth; for if they be mixed and swallowed with saliva, effects will take place similar to those which follow its introduction into the stomach in a saline state, namely—a sensation of a piercing, gnawing and burning kind, accompanied with an acute pain in the stomach and intestines, which last are violently contorted; convulsive vomiting, insatiable thirst, from the parched and rough state of the tongue and throat, hiccup, palpitation of the heart, and a deadly oppression of the whole breast succeed next; the matters ejected by the mouth, as well as the stools, exhibit a black, foetid and putrid appearance; at length, with the mortification of the bowels, the pain subsides and death terminates the sufferings of the patient. Soon after death, livid spots appear on the surface of the body, the nails become blue and often fall off, and so does the hair, and the whole body becomes very speedily putrid. On dissection, the stomach and bowels are found to be inflamed, gangrenous and corroded, and the blood fluid (that is dissolved.) When the quantity is so *very small* as not to prove fatal, tremors, paralysis and lingering hectic succeeds." [Thacher's *Dispensatory*, p. 299.]

Here we see the horrid effects of that terrible poison known in this country and in England by the common name of *Ratsbane*, and which any young man, who has passed through college and attended the required number of medical lectures, and enrolled himself for a short

time with a practitioner, may lawfully use, at his first step on the threshold of experience, provided it be according to the *formula* of the new Dispensatory; while a man of 60 years of age and 40 years experience, shall be hunted like a mad dog for using the *same quantity* of a herb, which the *same book* prescribes as a safe and valuable medicine!

Let us no longer boast of *our enlightened country*, or talk of *our rights* and *privileges*, when a citizen, who has discovered an invaluable medicine, and used it with such reiterated success as to excite the jealousy, envy and hatred of his rivals, shall be, by their wicked machinations, led in chains to a dungeon, where he indured more complicated misery than any citizen of these United States can or ought to suffer by the laws of the Union, or by the laws of any of its states, even had he been seen, by twenty witnesses, to have committed murder. But good rises out of evil. We think it not at all improbable that the Governor and Council may think it their duty, from this hint, to inquire into the state and condition of some of the jails in the county of Essex, in which case *Samuel Thomson's narrative* may be a useful guide to them.

Dr. Jacob Bigelow, under the head of *medical references*, in his article of *Lobelia*, directs his reader to the 6th Vol. of *Massachusetts's Reports*, which contains, *what is called* a report of *Thomson's trial*. We shall comment on this *strange report* in a future number, and shall only add to this an extract from the article *Lobelia Inflata*, as given to the public in the "*American Medical Botany, being a collection* of the native medical plants of the United States, containing their botanical history and chemical analysis, and properties and uses in medicine, diet and the arts. Its author, Dr. Bigelow says, "when swallowed in substance, it [the *Lobelia*] excites very speedy vomiting, accompanied with distressing and long continued sickness, and even with dangerous symptoms, if the dose be large. A melancholy instance of death, occasioned by the use of this plant, in the hands of a *quack*, is detailed in the 6th Vol. of the *Massachusetts's Reports*, in the trial of *Samuel Thomson*, an empiric practising in

Beverly, for the murder of Ezra Lovett. In this trial it appeared, that the patient, being confined by a cold, sent for the pretended physician, who gave him three powders of Lobelia in the course of half an hour, each of which vomited him violently, and left him in a great perspiration during the night. The next day two more powders were administered, each of which operated by vomiting and occasioned great distress. In like manner, two other powders were given the subsequent day, leaving the patient in a state of great prostration. Several days after this, the physician came again, and finding his patient still worse, administered several more powders, which occasioned great distress, and at length ceased to operate. Finding that the stomach was not sensible to the emetic effect of the Lobelia, the physician repeated the dose, and when the patient complained of great distress at the breast, and said he way dying, the doctor assured him the medicine would soon get down, or operate as a cathartic. However, on the same evening the patient lost his reason, and became convulsed, so that two men were required to hold him. To relieve which, the doctor forced down two more of his powders, and the patient, as was to be expected, grew worse, and continued so until he expired."

"The doctor, who had thus terminated the disease and the patient at once, was arrested and put upon trial for murder; but the *homicide*, proving a legitimate one, from the want of sufficient evidence of malice prepense, he was acquitted and set at liberty." (From p. p. 180, 181, of *American Medical Botany*.)

The account of the medicinal qualities and powerful effects of the emetic weed given by Dr. Thacher, appears to be that of a prudent man, who fairly relates what he had heard. He cautiously omits the name of the practitioner he censures, and only designates him as a "*noted Empiric*;" not so Dr. Bigelow. He calls him ~~toundly~~ "a QUACK," by which is commonly understood a cunning, tricking, *ignorant* fellow, who tampers with people's lives for the sake of gain; a character by no means applicable to the *discoverer* and introducer of the *Lobelia* into our *Materia Medica*. Bigelow calls him by name

and endeavors to fix upon him an indelible stigma of infamy, by referring his readers to a garbled account of the trial of Thomson, who though acquitted, was thereby prevented from making his defence, and proving the malice of the prosecution.

Being thus deprived of the opportunity of justifying his conduct, and clearing up his character, by the testimony of more than twenty witnesses, (among whom was to have been the Rev. Dr. Cutter,) Thomson inserted in the narrative of his life, the certificates of several respectable men. The one following, from William Raymond, dated Beverly, Dec. 7th, 1821, speaks directly to the case for which Thomson was indicted for murder, and reads thus,

" In the fall of the year of 1809, Dr. Thomson was sent for into this town, and I attended with him, and was knowing to ALL that transpired with Mr. Lovett in his sickness, until he died, which is as follows, viz. Mr. Ezra Lovett came for Dr. Thomson to visit his son Ezra, sick of a fever. The doctor could not attend to it, until he had called several times. He gave him medicine first on Monday evening; and on Wednesday attended him through a full course, [that is, we presume, giving the emetic, injections and steam bath,] as he did also to a cousin of Lovett's, who had been given over by all the doctors in a consumption of the liver, and who was completely cured by one operation, and enjoys his health to this day.

" Mr. Ezra Lovett, Jr. was so far relieved that the doctor thought he would not need any more medicine, and was called away to see Elder Bowles of Salem; but he gave Lovett strict charge not to go out or expose himself. On the Friday following he was so well, that he ventured out, and even went down the shore to see his friend. The wind was eastward and extremely cold, and he had a severe relapse, and was "much out," (that is delirious,) and continued to grow worse; and on Saturday night I sat up with him. His father wished me to administer some medicine, but I declined it as he was so sick, and advised him to send away to Salem for Dr. Thomson, who was then attending on Elder Bowles. He

was accordingly sent for, and arrived on Sunday evening, when on seeing the young man, he expressed great doubts of his recovery. Being urged, he administered his medicine, and gave his strict attention to him for about two hours, and then gave him over, as out of the reach of his medicine ; and requested his father to send for some other doctor ; but he declined it, saying—"if HE could not help him, he did not think any other doctor could," and he requested Dr. Thomson to stay all night, to which he agreed. *Elder Williams* was called in to pray with him.

"In the morning Dr. Thomson renewed his request to Mr. Lovett to have another doctor to take charge of his son. He accordingly called in Dr. How and Dr. Fisher, who took charge of the patient about sun-rise. Dr. Thomson then left him ; and those doctors attended on him until about ten o'clock, the next night, when he died.

"Notwithstanding Dr. Thomson "gave him over" in two hours after seeing him, and the doctors (Fisher and How) administered their medicine to him for twelve hours, yet about one year after Dr. Thomson was taken up for the MURDER of the said LOVETT; and no credit given him for the wonderful cure of his cousin (as before mentioned) who was attended on with him."

(Signed) WILLIAM RAYMOND."

Beverly, Dec. 7th, 1821.

And now, candid reader ! what thinkest thou of the public denunciation and prosecution for *murder* of a citizen who has enriched the *Materia Medica* with one of its most valuable articles, and who has introduced a novel practice, which is every day gaining more and more credit ? Compare the foregoing certificate of Wm. Raymond with the *suspicious* report in the 6th Vol. of the *Massachusetts's Reports*, and judge for thyself. Yes ! *suspicious* report, for Mr. Dudley Atkins Tyng was not present at the trial, and that may account for the garbled production. We never heard or suspected that Mr. Tyng was a *gurbler* of reports ; we would, however, advise him never again to admit into his valuable volumes any *hearsay* reports, lest he and the public should again be decived by the fell spirit of medical persecution.—On the trial one young woman swore that Dr. Thomson

crowded his pukes down Ezra Lovett's throat by main force, while he cried *murder! murder!* till he died!— This was doubtless deemed too gross a lie, to be printed in the report.

The next witness on the part of the Commonwealth was *John Lemon*, who was directed to state what he knew about the prisoner at the bar. He stated that he had been out of health two years, being much troubled with a pain in his breast, and was so bad that he was unable to work, and that he could get no help at all from the doctors; that he applied to Thomson who had cured him in one week, and that was all he knew about the prisoner at the bar. Upon this *Judge Parsons* appeared to be out of all patience, and turning to the Solicitor-General said, "I wonder what sort of men you had for a grand jury that could find a bill on such evidence as you have adduced." (See Thomson's narrative, p. 103.)

Then came forward Dr. FRENCH of Salisbury, who was the bitterest of Thomson's accusers, and the *principal cause of a bill being found against him*. It was expected, by the doctors present, that *his* evidence would seal the doom of Thomson; but he acknowledged, on cross examination, that Thomson practised in his neighbourhood with good success, and that the herb he used was harmless. Again Judge Parsons expressed his wonder of the men they must have had for a grand jury!

In this medical persecution, it ought to be distinctly remembered, that although Dr. Thomson was promptly acquitted, he was thereby prevented from adducing *his* witnesses to prove the salutary effects of his new practice. Surprising as it may appear to some, this *persecution* and *prosecution* cost poor Thomson upwards of TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS. He was obliged to mortgage his farm before he could extricate himself.

Among the certificates given to Thomson respecting his practice was one by *Stephen Neal*, a respectable gentleman of the society of "*Friends*," containing a number of cases. We can insert here only the first paragraph, t<sup>h</sup>e:

"I am now willing to assert with all the boldness that truth inspires, that I have made use of the medicine

aforesaid [Thomson's] for the space of ten years past, in my own family, and in that time have not used any other medicine, or called on any other physician for advice.—I have administered the medicine to a great number of my friends and neighbors, which generally produced beneficial effects. I shall state a few of the many cases, and the treatment and advantage received." Then follow the cases.

In our next number Dr. Thomson must speak for himself, and tell his own story his own way—of his original ideas, of his arrest—his incarceration in a dungeon, previous to his trial, and his release from meditated destruction, planned by his rivals, but baffled by truth and justice.

AN ECCLECTIC.



### THE ECCLECTIC—No. V.

In the days of Grecian greatness, their physicians were divided into sects, or schools. The most ancient were called **EMPIRICS**, who admitted only one method of acquiring a genuine skill in the medicinal art, which was *by experience*, which they defined *a knowledge acquired by the evidence of the senses*: that this was either *fortuitous*, or *by design*, as when one finds a salutary effect, he exhibits it in a parallel case. This they termed *Epilogismus*, or as the Latins express it, *transitus ad simile*.—This sect boasted of *Hippocrates* as their head, who relied principally on *nature* and *experience*. But this sect of Empirics were opposed by another called **Dogmatists**, who maintained the necessity of knowing the *latent* as well as the evident cause of diseases, and that a physician ought to understand all the natural actions and functions of the human body, which necessarily presupposes a knowledge of the internal parts, as taught by anatomy. By *latent* causes the dogmatic physicians meant the doctrine of the four elements, *fire*, *air*, *earth* and *water*, the assigned principles of our bodies, whose change, state or temperature gave origin to a good or bad state of health; or else from a vitiation in the qualities of the humors, producing disorder, or else from some changes in the atmosphere as Hippocrates believed.

The Dogmatic sect did not deny the necessity of observation, but they contended those observations could not be judiciously and accurately made without the assistance of reason. One taught that a consummate physician was made by deep thinking and close reasoning on established principles, while the more modest Empirics asserted, that all researches after the latent cause of diseases were vain, seeing NATURE herself was incomprehensible, and her secret operations past finding out. They observed, that if reasoning were the only requisite to make a skilful physician, their philosophers and logicians would make the best physicians.

The Empirics were by no means deriders of reasoning, but they asserted that life was too short to enter into the endless disputes of the schools, where generally the brightest genius and the most voluble tongue carried the victory away from the laborious experiments. The famous Emperor Montezuma, among the Mexicans, was of this way of thinking; for he endeavoured to collect into one vast garden, the various herbs in his Empire, and directed the physicians to study and report their medicinal virtues, and this was done by tasting and eating them; for, happily, they knew nothing of chemical analysis, of a plant, in order to *discover its medicinal qualities!* But for this, we should have been ignorant of that valuable catalogue of simples, wherewith South America has enriched medicine.

Cotemporary with the Empirics and the Dogmatists, was another sect, called the *Methodicks*. These were a sort of logical physicians, and not unlike our *Nosologists*, who have divided and subdivided disorders, and encumbered the art with a thousand useless names, and who, like our fashionable *Botanists*, while obscuring the science to no useful purpose, have persuaded themselves and others, that they were advancing the knowledge of the nature of medicinal herbs.

At length a fourth sect arose, who called themselves *Ecclectics*, because they selected and chose out from the writings, and the practice of all around them, whatever they judged most excellent, giving to experience its due,

and to reasoning the honor and credit which belong to it. From this rapid glance of the characters of some of the ancient physicians, the pupil may understand the full meaning of the words of the illustrious CULLEN, who speaking of the *great* BOERHAAVE, says—"He was a man of general erudition; and, applying to medicine, he had carefully studied the auxiliary branches of Anatomy, Chemistry and Botany, so that he excelled in each. In forming a system of Physic, he seems to have studied diligently all the several writings of both ancient and modern physicians; and, without prejudice in favor of any former systems, he endeavored to be a *candid* and *genuine ECCLECTIC.*" (See preface to Cullen's First Lines, p. XVII.)

We have said enough to enable the general reader to make a just distinction between an *Empiric* and a "*Quack.*" Let us see how far the subject of these numbers deserves to be enrolled among the former, or stigmatized with the latter.

SAMUEL THOMSON tells us in the interesting narrative of his life, that his mind was bent from childhood on learning the medicinal properties of vegetables; that he was in the constant habit of tasting every plant he met; and having been blessed with a very retentive memory of impressions, he always recollectcd the taste of those he found, and remembered the use of such articles as were communicated to him by others. I was often told, says he, that I should poison myself; but I never could believe that the beasts of the field, to whom the bountiful Creator has given instinctive discernment of wholesome food from poison, were wiser than man, provided he lived agreeably to nature, and eschewed the luxuries of fashionable life. He tasted and well remembered the effects of the *emetick herb* (*Lo-belia*) when but 4 or 5 years old; that he used to give some of the leaves or pods to his playmates, and laugh at its effects on them; but that he never contemplated seriously its extraordinary qualities before he was about twenty years of age, when he happened to give it, through sport, to a man who was mowing with him. The man plucked a sprig of it and recommenced his labour, but

soon stopped and said, "you have poisoned me." He sweat, staggered, and imagined that he was dying. He trembled and had no more color of life than a corpse, and threw himself on the ground ; but we helped him to a neighboring spring, and gave him water to drink, when he vomited most profusely. After getting him into the house and on the bed, he, in a few hours, became composed, with no other alteration in his feelings than what arose from a most voracious appetitite, which he freely indulged. It was this circumstance which gave me, says our Empiric, the first strong impression of the value of the pale blue flowered Lobelia as a medicine ; for while I saw its powerful effects, I learnt that it might be taken into the stomach with safety, and the idea of its singular virtues never left me from that day to this. I was now in the habit of gathering and preserving, at the proper season, all kinds of medicinal herbs, and varying my experience with them ; some I found would have their operations reversed by boiling, as is the case with Lobelia, while some gave out their virtues to ardent spirits, others to a watery infusion, and so on ; but I had not then any idea of ever devoting myself to practice medicine as a physician ; for I had allowed a *doctor* to live in a house on my farm, with certain privileges, and to pay his rent in *doctoring* my family, which was an increasing one ; but I found it a losing game, for whenever any of the family *took cold*, or were over fatigued, or eat too much, the *doctor* was called in, and never failed to give them physic, and sometimes to bleed them. It seems as a judgment upon me, that some one of my large family were sick most of the time the doctor lived on my farm, which was about *seven years* ; for after he moved off I had very little sickness. I attended them myself, and when some were seriously sick, with such remarkable success, that my assistance was called for by the neighbors, and the circle of applications widening, I concluded, at length to devote myself entirely to the study and practice of physic.

Born in a new and wilderness country, my advantages of education were very small, and my chances of knowing the world still less ; blessed with a natural

gift for examining the things of nature, my mind was left free and without any bias from books, to follow that inclination by inquiring into the meaning of the great variety of objects around me, and with the relationship and dependence of one thing upon another. I had read the Bible intently all my life, but could not find therein all I wanted. Possessing a body like other men, I was led to inquire into its component parts and peculiar nature.—I learnt that its natural elements were, like those of all other animals, *earth, water, air and FIRE.* I perceived that *heat*, or what the doctors now call “*CALORIC,*” was *life*, and *cold*, that is, the absence of heat, was *DEATH*; and that this *vital heat* was the primary agent in supporting existence and carrying on the growth of the body, and that the *stomach* was the fire place, and the food or medicine, the wood or fuel which kept the engine in play and carried us on through life, until the materials of it were, by its natural action or attrition, worn out, when it returns to earth, and enters again into the common stock of materials, to be made over again in a manner that is past finding out.

It appears that Thomson’s natural sagacity led him on to a general idea of the structure and economy of the human frame—of *digestion*, of the *use of the bile*—of the *circulation*—and to a confused notion of the glands, and of their secretions and excretion, and to a tolerable idea of the *nervous system*: in a word, to as correct a knowledge of the animal economy as commonly fell to the share of the country practitioners of that day. We find, however, that our *Empiric* had, like other physicians, his theories; for example, he conceived that there were in the stomach three combined powers to effectuate digestion, the first *heat*, the second an *acid*, and the third *bile*; that when the heat is deficient, the bile is defective in quantity or quality, leaving the *acid* predominating in the prime organ of digestion and vigor, giving rise to what is vulgarly called *heart-burn*. Accordingly his method of radically curing this complaint is to raise the heat of the stomach by his *lobelia*, *cayenne*, and other heating vegetables, which shall enable the biliary system to brew stronger bile, which by overcoming the predomi-

nating acid, shall carry on the process of digestion with ease and pleasure. While he uses those permanent stimulants, he abjures the use of ardent spirits; the first he compares to a steady coal fire, and the latter to the transient and dangerous blaze made by shavings. It is not probable that Samuel Thomson ever read the writing of *Galen*, yet it is remarkable that his doctrine of *heat* and of *cold* varies but little from that renowned physician; and it is also as remarkable that his belief in, what *Hippocrates*, the Father of Physic, called NATURE the curer of diseases, appears in all Thomson's theories. He differs, however, from the Grecian luminary of medicine, who waited for the crisis, or turn of a fever, whereas he tries, at once to keep nature in her salutary process, and by means that have startled the *uninitiated*. The first exhibition of all great and extraordinary improvements has always operated alarm on the mind of ignorance, as in the first cannon, first sky-rocket and first steam-boat. It is repetition that lessens fear, and adds to our stock of knowledge.

Thomson, like all other reformers, derides the general practice of the "order," or "regular" physicians, and carries the matter, in our opinion, too far. He denounces the use of *arsenic*, of *mercury*, of *antimony*, of *opium*, and of *nitre*; and considers *blistering* as useless, and the free use of the *lancet* destructive. He has a general aversion to the use of minerals, and to chemical preparations, and defends the idea that every region produces *vegetable* remedies for its epidemics. He seems to forget that opium is a vegetable production. He imagines that the *new Pharmacæpia* got up by the physicians of this country, with a *new set of names*, is but a scheme to continue the people in ignorance of the history of the medicine which the *Faculty* make them swallow. These wrong notions and prejudices are naturally accounted for in a man of Thomson's peculiar life and habits, who has gone on through our villages, for thirty years past, with his medicine in one hand, and his staff of defence in the other, often dexterously wielded against the interest and mortified pride of the "privileged order of practitioners."

#### AN ECCLECTIC.

P. S. When noticing the *report* of Thomson's trial, in

Tyng's collection, we advised against *hearsay* reports. "lest the public should again be deceived by the fell spirit of medical persecution," we had an idea that *that* report was drawn up by a PHYSICIAN. We had not then the least suspicion of the very high source whence it flowed, and shall act accordingly.



### THE ECCLECTIC—No. VI.

*We can never be really in danger until the FORMS of Law  
are made use of to destroy the SUBSTANCE of our Liberties.*

JUNIUS.

The subject of these numbers will now be presented to the public in a serious point of view, that of a citizen persecuted for exertions in favor of suffering humanity; and should the narrative recall to mind the lamentable transactions of 1692, we cannot wonder at the association, especially when the same county is implicated. In extenuation of those errors of our forefathers, it may be remarked, that a century and a half ago, a belief in the reality of witchcraft prevailed in OLD England as well as in NEW. Our ancestors brought the delusion with them. The arts of the designing were borrowed, and the credulity of the populace augmented from the parent country, where laws were made against witches. But what excuse can be offered for a persecuting spirit since we have stood alone, an independent nation?

SAMUEL THOMSON, on whom NATURE had conferred a DEGREE in *Physic*, with a steady and fearless spirit in practising it, tells his readers, between p. p. 92 and 112 of his narrative, that his success in curing diseases, in which others had tried their skill and failed, excited envy, hatred and malice, with the usual consequences of such malignant passions, for whom men fear, they hate, and whom they hate, they wish to destroy. As facts could not be entirely smothered, the envious attempted to discolour them by ridicule, or by rendering the physician odious with opprobrious epithets; hence they nicknamed him as the "*old wizzard*," the "*Indian doctor*,"

and "the dealer with the Devil," &c. They also nicknamed his medicines.

It seems that Thomson had a large share of practice, and a very considerable run of success in the town of Salisbury, in Essex, where dwelt a *Dr. French*, who was particularly disturbed by the successful career of our Empiric. During Thomson's absence from the town and vicinity on a visit to his family, this Dr. French appears, from the narrative, to have meditated his ruin, for on Thomson's return to Salisbury, he was informed that a bill of indictment had been or was about to be found for the murder of Ezra Lovett, twelve months before. We would here remark that the narrative, in this part, is a little obscure, owing no doubt to the narrator's ignorance of the forms and technicalities of the law; but there is no contradiction, and the meaning is obvious.

We learn from out the narrative, that after a bill of indictment for wilful murder against Samuel Thomson had been found by the manœuvres chiefly of Dr. French and a Deacon P. who was one of the grand jury, they got people to advise and urge Thomson to run off, and keep out of the way of prosecution; but he stiffly refused to do so, and declared he preferred meeting his trial to leaving the ground. At 10 o'clock at night Dr. French came to Thomson's lodgings with an officer, who pronounced him a prisoner of the Commonwealth. He was then taken to French's house, and a guard placed over him, where the owner of it insulted him in a shameful manner, without any thing being said by the prisoner to provoke it. Before day light, the complainant, French, rode off to Salem to fetch the bill of indictment. Before he returned, Thomson was carried before a justice of the peace, who also was a physician and a friend of his accuser; but he postponed the examination until near night. In the meantime the constable took him to his own house, and put him in a back room, leaving him entirely alone in that part of the house. When the constable and others returned to it, some of them asked Thomson why he did not make his escape, as he easily might through a back window, which was not fastened? He replied, that as he was in no fear of the consequen-

ces of their indictment, he was determined to be tried upon it. The juggle of all this is too manifest for remark. They meant to drive him out of the country, or confine him in prison throughout the approaching winter and spring. The farce of an examination was merely to wait the return of the prime accuser, French, who brought with him the sheriff's officer, to whom Thomson was delivered, and directly put in irons. French used this renewed opportunity to abuse him in the most savage terms, declaring that he should be hung, or else consigned to prison for life. In iron shackles this disciple of the most ancient school of the Empirics was conveyed to Newburyport, and put into a most loathsome dungeon, with a man who had been convicted of a most heinous crime towards an infant, and sentenced to solitary confinement. The culprit was very glad to have company. It seems that Thomson had braced up his soul to meet with firmness any event; but that this condemned cell was worse than he expected. He found neither chair or table, and nothing but a bundle of straw on the floor for a bed, and one shabby blanket that appeared to have never been washed. He suffered much from the peculiar cold of a dungeon, neither fire or candle was allowed.—“I tried,” says the unfortunate man, “to compose myself to rest, but could get no sleep the first night. I felt something crawling over me, accompanied with a burning and itching. Not suspecting the cause, I inquired of my fellow-sufferer what it was? He told me it was lice, and that there were enough in that dungeon to shingle a meeting-house.” To fill up the measure of his misery, filth (of the worse sort) ran from the rooms above into their cell, which was so offensive that he was almost stifled with the stench.

Had this man really committed murder in the first degree, such a condition of confinement, and such a state of suffering *before trial*, is far beyond the circumference of our laws; and the sheriff, who is the legal jailor of the county, ought to have been called to an account for it.

The morning light was described to have been about sufficient through the iron grate to convince the prisoner

of his horrible situation: confined to a small space between stone and mortar, the air loaded with stinking vapour, and their bodies the nourishment of the most loathsome of vermin, must damp the spirits of any man; yet notwithstanding all this, Thomson says that his innocence gave him spirits, and restrained him from loud lamentation. At length he was called to, through the grating to take his breakfast, which consisted of musty, or damaged coffee, in an old tin pot, without milk or sweetening, so very bad as to be unwholesome. To this liquid was added a tin pan containing hard pieces of Indian bread, and the "nape" of a fish, too hard for his teeth to manage. This inadequate fare served them both till 3 o'clock in the afternoon, when about the same quantity was brought, which was all allowed them until the next morning.

What has now been stated is true, or it is false, or exaggerated. If false, the calumny, even at this distance of time, can be detected; but if strictly true, what a stain does it leave on these officers of the county of Essex, to whom the care and *safe keeping* of prisoners are entrusted *before trial*? It is said, that however these things may have been 16 years ago, they are in a measure remedied by a new prison. But is the *principle* in the treatment of prisoners essentially altered?

The next day Mr. Osgood, a benevolent man of the Society of "*Friends*," came from Salisbury to visit the incarcerated Empiric, when, on witnessing his miserable situation, he was so affected by it that he could scarcely speak. He did not attempt to comfort him by words merely, but went out and brought in wholesome provisions, which he needed; for it is hardly probable, according to Thomson's account that he could have survived the winter on such bad and scanty food. When I detailed to my worthy friend Osgood, says Thomson, my being hand cuffed, and when he perceived my miserable lodgings and filthy cell, he wept like a child. And may He who has glorified the virtue of such as visit the "sick and imprisoned" reward him for it! This good man furnished the prisoner with a proper bed, and with such a stock of provisions as not only supplied his fel-

low-sufferer with a sufficiency, but allowed his wretched wife to carry the scraps and crusts to her starving children. She came every day to the prison. The condition of this miserable couple was so much worse than my own, says Thomson, that I derived consolation and resignation from the comparison.

Christian reader! I have epitomized the tale as given by Thomson himself, and printed by E. G. House, in this city, with now and then an elucidation from oral statements, the result of inquiry into the truth of the narrative. If I impose a false story on my readers, I can only say that I myself suffer under the like imposition.—A closer investigation might betray to Thomson and his friends the writer of these numbers. They may, however, serve as a clew to the whole truth, should any part of it be concealed.

In a few days after Mr. Osgood's benevolent visit, came *Judge Rice*, from Kittery. He is a Judge of the common pleas, and has been a member of the legislature one and twenty years. This respectable gentleman had honored Thomson with his friendship, and with his good opinion and confidence as a practitioner of medicine.—He brought a lawyer with him, and we consulted, says Thomson, together; and it was concluded to petition for a *special court*, otherwise I should have to remain in my dungeon almost a year. Why this was chosen in preference to the more summary mode of a writ of *habeas corpus*, does not appear. They, however, took it for granted that a man could not be bailed on such an indictment and under his peculiar circumstances; a doctrine which I venture to doubt both on principles of common sense and common equity.

Judge Rice undertook this business of obtaining a prompt trial by a special court, with great zeal. Thomson says, I think he told me, that he or Mr. Bartlett rode back and forth between Newburyport and Boston fifteen times. At length Chief Justice Parsons concluded, reluctantly, to hold a court at Salem on the 10th of December, (1809,) which was one month from Thomson's commitment. During that time the weather was very cold, and the prisoner suffered greatly from that cause,

perhaps more from his favorite theory, and from the foulness of the air. Such was its noisome state that his visitants could not endure to stay long in it.

By a New-England custom, prisoners of all sorts experience more than ordinary attention on Thanksgiving-day; accordingly, those in the Newburyport prison were collected in the upper story of the building, where, says Thomson, we took together our supper, when we tried to be cheerful and enjoy our meal. The assemblage consisted of *murderers, thieves, robbers* and ~~poor debtors~~. Among them was an universal complaint of the filthiness, and very bad condition of the prison. Before it was quite dark, Thomson and his companion were waited on to their dismal den again.

Being provided with materials for writing, our *Empiric* resolved to try if his muse could sing as well in a cage as in the woods and fields. And in this situation he wrote the *Medical Circular—The Doctor and Culomel*, and some other light pieces, which have been printed in New-York and elsewhere. However distressed by an improper prison, these productions show that Thomson's mind was not depressed by the heart-sinking passions of conscious guilt and remorse. It is the innocent soul that is elastic.

When about to be removed to Salem for trial, he was taken out of his cell to be cleansed, fit to be seen in a public court, and was permitted to breakfast by a fire; but the change was too great, and sudden faintness was the consequence. After an interval sufficient for recovery, the irons were again fixed on his wrists, and thus shackled he was conveyed to the county town. The weather was cold, roads bad, and the distance twenty-five miles; and I was, says Thomson, distressed by the handcuffs which caused the blood to settle under my nails. We learnt on our arrival that the trial was postponed ten days, by reason of the indisposition of Judge Parsons, for which I was not sorry, because my confinement in the Salem jail was much more comfortable than in that of Newburyport, and as it allowed what I much needed, a little tranquil leisure. Although still deprived of the comfort of a fire, he was visited by several re-

spectable inhabitants, amongst whom he mentions the Baptist minister, Bowles, whom he had benefitted by his medicines, and Capt. R. whose lady sent her servant twice every day with warm coffee and other grateful articles, so that by the time his trial came on, he had lain in a pretty good stock of health and spirits. Some good ladies, particularly one who had been cured of dropsy by the prisoner, took care that his clothing should be made fit for his public appearance.

It was concluded by my friends to employ also as counsellor, Joseph Story, Esq. whose fee was paid by a contribution of persons belonging to the Rev. Mr. Bowles' congregation.

The trial was before *Chief Justice Parsons, Judges Sewall and Parker.*

After the usual forms of reading the indictment, &c. the *Solicitor-General* opened the prosecution by stating that Samuel Thomson had, at sundry times, killed his patients with a deadly poison called *Lobelia*, &c. &c.—(see Tyng's Reports, Vol. 6,) and Dr. Howe being called to give evidence, swore that the prisoner gave the poisonous plant to the deceased *Ezra Lovett, Jr.* and that it was the *Lobelia*, and produced a sample of it, which was handed around the court at arms length, while some held their nose, such was the horror which the Solicitor and the indictment had excited. But what was their surprise when Judge Rice first smelt of it strongly, and then eat it! The *Solicitor-General* exclaimed in a tone of astonishment, “what, sir! are you going to poison yourself in the presence of the court?”

Then came the prime mover of the prosecution, Dr. FRENCH of Salisbury, whose evidence several in court imagined would complete Thomson's ruin; but so overwhelmed in confusion and sunken in spirits was this vindictive man, that he contradicted himself, and probably said what he did not mean to say. Nothing chagrines the wicked more than to find their *stiletto* not driven with sufficient force to reach the heart of the intended victim. A wounded enemy is a dangerous object.

The next witness for the Commonwealth (*Lemon*), actually testified strongly in Thomson's favor, and gave

evidence to his skill and success in his own case, where his cure was complete. Then came two young women whom Thomson said he never saw before, and they swore that Dr. Thomson crammed his emetics down Lovett's throat by main force, while he cried *murder!* at the violence till he expired!

The Rev. Dr. Cutler was the next called on the part of the Commonwealth to relate what he knew of the efficacy and safety of the *Lobelia*. He gave clear evidence to its efficacy and *safety*. For having been afflicted himself with the asthma, he was advised by Dr. Drury of Marblehead, who was also an asthmatic, to employ this remedy. It cured both of them. As far as I can trace it, I am led to believe that Dr. Drury learnt the efficacy of the *emetic herb* in asthmatic cases, from Thomson's practice, who long before used it in the form of tincture.

The Chief Justice asked the Solicitor-General in a tone of impatience what sort of men composed the grand jury who could find a bill for murder on such evidence? It ought, however, to be mentioned, that *Barnabas Bidwell, Esq.* who has since emigrated to Canada, officiated at that period as county attorney.

We ask the reader's attention to the REPORT of the trial of *Samuel Thomson*, as it is written in the 6th Vol. of *Tyng's Reports*. It is there said, that Thomson came into Beverly, where Lovett lived, announced himself as a physician, and professed an ability to cure all fevers, whether *black, grey, green or yellow*. [Now it is remarkable that Thomson rejects, in his writings, these varieties, and contends for the identity, or universality of fever, and absolutely derides the distinctions here sneered at.]

The reporter next describes the process of sweating and puking Lovett, until he was ordered to a warm bed, where he lay in a profuse sweat all night. He represents him as *comfortable* the next day, which was Tuesday—on Wednesday afternoon, the prisoner gave him two more emetic powders, with draughts of his "*coffee.*"<sup>\*</sup>

\* When Thomson gave an infusion which was somewhat nauseous, he used to add sugar and milk to it, and called it *his coffee*; but *bulldog*, and *ram cat*, and *screw auger*, were nicknames used by the country people only.

On Thursday the deceased appeared to be *comfortable*. In the afternoon he was again sweated, and on Friday and Saturday he continued to be *so comfortable* that Thomson ceased to visit him; but it appears, by his printed narrative and by William Raymond's testimony, that Lovett, after being charged *not to expose himself abroad*, actually went down the sea shore on a raw cold day, with the wind at east, took a severe cold and relapse, with alarming symptoms, among which was delirium and convulsions; on which, Thomson was again sent for from Salem, and *directly* pronounced him beyond the reach of medicine. But there is no statement of this sort in the report, neither is a word there said of Lovett, the father, *urging* the prisoner to administer something to his son, even against hope; and the report says, that after repeated doses of medicine, it ceased to operate, and that great debility ensued, and convulsions and loss of reason continued till he expired. All that has now been advanced, and more would have been proved, had the prisoner been put on his defence.

The Solicitor-General also stated, says the report, that before Lovett applied to the prisoner, several patients had died under his hands; and to prove this statement, he called several witnesses, of whom but *one appeared*, and he, on the contrary, testified that he was relieved by Thomson from his complaint, which had not since returned. "And there was no evidence, says the reporter in the cause, that the prisoner, in the course of his very novel practice, had experienced any fatal accident among his patients." Thus far the report; and if does not amount to an honorable *acquittal* I know not what does. Why then cast reflections on the innocent?

I have been thus particular on account of the charge of the Chief Justice to the jury, which concludes the article of the Commonwealth versus Samuel Thomson, for the wilful murder of Ezra Lovett, Jr. which strikes a common man, who is no *juris consultus*, as something extraordinary, especially when we consider that the Judge was recommending a dismissal of the prosecution *upon the very evidence adduced against the prisoner*.

The Chief Justice observed to the jury, "that the

deceased lost his life by the unskilful treatment of the prisoner, did not seem to admit of any reasonable doubt." [However we at the distance of 15 years, presume very strongly to doubt it.] But of this point the jury were to judge. Before the Monday evening preceding the death of Lovett, he had by profuse sweats, and by often repeated doses of the emetic powder, been reduced very low." [But previously to this, Lovett had broken the orders of his physician *to remain in the house*, and had gone down to the sea shore to see *his friend*, when "*the wind was easterly and extremely cold*"—and had a severe relapse, accompanied with delirium.] "In this state," continues the Chief Justice, "on that evening, other doses of the '*Indian tobacco*' were administered.—When the second portion did not operate, probably because the tone of his stomach was destroyed, the repetition of them, that they might operate as a cathartic, was followed by convulsion fits, loss of reason and death."

All this is at variance with the evidence which Thomson had ready to adduce in court, had not his prompt acquittal deprived him of the wished for opportunity of advancing it. [See Wm. Raymond's certificate in No. 4, where he says that he was knowing to ALL that took place in Lovett's *last illness*, T. relieved him and made him "*comfortable*," according to Judge Parsons himself, in his *first attack*. When Thomson was called in, after Lovett had, *by his own imprudence* suffered a *relapse*, accompanied with loss of reason and convulsions, he declared that the young man was beyond the reach of medicine. But here T. was to blame in not adhering to his first resolution of resisting the *importunity of the father* in giving his son more medicine. It was done to satisfy the patient's father, against the declared judgment of the physician.

Judge Parsons continues thus—"But though innocent of the crime of murder, the prisoner may on this indictment be convicted of manslaughter, if the evidence be sufficient. And the Solicitor-General strongly urged, that the prisoner was guilty of manslaughter, because he rashly and presumptuously administered to the deceased a deleterious medicine, which in his hands, by reason of his gross ignorance became a deadly poison!"

The prisoner's ignorance is in this case apparent.—On any other ground consistent with his innocence, it is not easy to conceive, that on the Monday evening before the death, when the second dose of his powerful emetic had failed to operate through the extreme weakness of the deceased, he could expect a repetition of these *fatal poisons* would prove a cathartic and relieve the patient." [Here the *ignorance* of the JUDGE is more apparent than Thomson's. There were then perhaps, a dozen people within the sound of his voice, who could have changed his ignorance into intelligence. How grating must this have been to the feelings of the arraigned at the bar for murdering a man, whom he had relieved and rendered "COMFORTABLE!"]

The Judge, after making the well known distinctions between *felonious homicide*, *murder*, and *manslaughter*, proceeds thus—"In the present case, there is no evidence that the prisoner, either from his own experience, or from the information of others, had any knowledge of the fatal effects of the *Indian Tobacco*, (for so the learned Judge calls the *Lobelia Inflata*, but on what authority we are ignorant,) when injudiciously administered : but the ONLY testimony produced to this point, PROVED that the patient found a CURE from the medicine."

It is an evidence of the order and decorum of our courts of justice, that Thomson's friends did not shout aloud at this declaration of the Chief Justice. A more complete triumph they could not have anticipated.—And here, we are of opinion, the Judge ought to have stopped; but he concluded his charge in these words.

"It is to be exceedingly lamented that people are so easily persuaded to put confidence in these itinerant quacks, and to trust their lives to strangers without knowledge or experience:—[T. was originally one of our native farmers, with a large family, and had practised the healing art between 20 and 30 years] "If this astonishing infatuation should continue, and men are found to yield to the *impudent* pretensions of ignorant empiricism, there seems to be no adequate remedy by a criminal prosecution, without the *interference of the legislature.*"

And this *interference* was attempted by a member from Taunton, but the *democracy* of Massachusetts defeated the *Anti-Quack* bill, as I hope it ever may—Yet is the like object now in full chace in the state of New-York, where the enlightened DE WITT CLINTON presides as Governor!

To add weight to the just mentioned *extra judicial* denunciation of an innocent man, the officious reporter tacks to it an ordinance of our ancestors in the year 1649. See p. 140.

Although the prosecution of *Samuel Thomson* added to his credit as a man, and reputation as a practitioner, yet the report as printed in Tyng's collection, Vol. 6th, has been highly injurious to his character. Dr. Thacher has quoted it in his *Dispensatory*; and Dr. Bigelow in his "*American Botany*," in aggravated terms, and repeats it in his "*Medical References*." These are serious injuries.

*Thomson* has borne all these wrongs for a series of years in silence, and in all probability would have continued silent, had he not been destined to run the gauntlet between two ministers of religion in Boston, with which we shall not intermeddle, because we have always observed that when any of that *order* stoop down to a quarrel, there is very often an acrimony which even priestly pride seldom dilutes so as to render it safe for an ordinary to come near it.\* We shall only add here, that *Thomson*, wishing to diffuse all he knew in his "*novel practice*," was desirous to obtain the assistance of some person of ability, character and address, to assist him in preparing a book fit for the public eye, was recommended, he being a stranger in the capital, to the Rev. *Elias Smith*. Here *Thomson*, who had set the laws "*steel trap*" at defiance, allowed himself to be *duped* beyond any thing we ever heard.

#### AN ECCLECTIC.

\*See "a statement of the conduct of *ELIAS SMITH* towards Dr. *SAMUEL THOMSON*, printed by E. G. House—and the minutes and report of a council, signed by *HOSEA BALLOU*, moderator, printed by *Henry Bowen*—and a *REPLY to that report, by a committee appointed for that purpose by the FRIENDLY MEDICAL BOTANIC SOCIETY*, printed by E. G. House, all in Boston."

## THE ECCLECTIC—No. VII.

“Worry’d by rogues and past all hopes of *bail*,  
“The unpity’d wretch lies rotting in a jail.”

*Lord Roscommon.*

“I am no lawyer by profession, nor do I pretend to be more deeply read than every “American” gentleman should be in the laws of his country. I speak to the plain understanding of the people, and appeal to their honest, liberal construction of me.” *Junius.*

The trial of Samuel Thomson for the *wilful murder* of Ezra Lovett, Jr. has been deemed of sufficient importance to be *reported*, and that too by an “highly respected friend” of the regular and legal reporter; and thus given to the public is a fair subject for free remark through the medium of the press.

Why a citizen of a fair moral character, was thrown into a condemned cell, manifestly unhealthy, and shockingly offensive, with a culprit sentenced to solitary confinement, and fed with articles unwholesome in quality and deficient in quantity, is a serious question for those to answer to whom the “*safe keeping*” of a prisoner is committed *before trial*.

How he came thus very rigorously confined and treated, is another very serious question in this enlightened country of equal liberty and laws. Why was not Thomson admitted to *bail* after his strange indictment? seeing the *circumstances* of his case were known, for he kept the same ground, and pursued the same practice *full a year* after the alleged murder. It has been said he could not be bailed because indicted for murder; but that opinion may be controverted. Whoever is conversant with the history of England and of English America, and has a general idea of that jurisprudence which reigns in both countries, must know that the laws have provided for the immediate enlargement of persons arrested on “light suspicion.” By the ancient common law all felonies were bailable, until murder was excepted by statute, particularly by that of Westminster, and that of the 31st of Charles 2d, commonly called the *habeas corpus act*, which taken together, completes the security of the subject, or citizen, and renders clear the doctrine of *delivery, bailing or remanding* the prisoner. While the

law wisely provided against that unlimited power of replevy of ancient times, it left much to the *discretion* of the judge for ANY alleged crime whatever, when the CIRCUMSTANCES of the case seem to require it. But it was not left to the humane feelings or partiality of the Justice, or to what may be called ordinary or common sense discretion, but *discernere per legem quid sit justum.*

In Thomson's case the *circumstances* were not common, but peculiar. He was not complained of until *a year after* the alleged crime, and he maintained the same theatre of action in spite of efforts to drive him away by envious practitioners. It should be noted also, that the prosecutor or complainant was not the father of Ezra Lovett, nor any relation or connexion, but a *rival practitioner*, notorious for his enmity to the accused, who had narrowed very materially his circle of business, and whose success had worked up the village doctor's rage to dire resentment. Again, the very nature of the allegations must have convinced any man acquainted with our criminal laws, that an indictment for *wilful murder*, which includes malice aforethought, could never be sustained in the case of Thomson; for let a "*quack*" be ever so ignorant, his strong wish and intention must be to benefit his patient, and save his life, and to quote him as a living witness of his skill:—in a word, to save him by all means for the sake of his own reputation and pecuniary advantage. Well might Chief Justice Parsons ask the Solicitor-General, in a tone of surprsie, what sort of men had you for a grand jury who could find a bill on such evidence? And the public may ask what sort of a man had you for a Judge who would refuse to bail a man indicted on such slight suspicion, and on an accusation, which, if proved, could not convict the physician of crime. "If a physician, says Lord Hale, *whether licensed or not*, gives a person a potion, without any intent of doing him any bodily harm, but with intent to cure him, or prevent disease, and contrary to the expectation of the physician, it kills him, he is not guilty of murder or manslaughter."—(1. Hale J. C. 439.) And what is entirely to our purpose, Judge Parsons himself told the jury, in this very case of Samuel Thomson, that,

to constitute the crime of murder, with which the prisoner is charged, the killing must have been with malice, either express or implied. There was no evidence to induce a belief that the prisoner, (Thomson,) by his treatment, intended to kill or injure the deceased; (Lovett)—on the contrary, it appears that his intention was to cure him. To constitute (even) manslaughter the killing must have been the consequence of some unlawful act. Now there is no law which prohibits *any man* from prescribing for a sick person with his consent, if he honestly intends to cure him by his prescription.—And it is not felony, if through his ignorance of the quality of the medicine prescribed, or of the nature of the disease, or of both, the patient contrary to his expectations, should die." (See Tyng's Reports, vol. 6th from p. p. 134 to 142.)

Taking all the *circumstances*, and these well known principles of law into consideration, why was not Thomson admitted to bail? We do not mean that species of bail termed "mainprize," but that special bail, commonly enjoyed by imprisoned debtors, instead of a most noisome lousy dungeon. The repeated applications made to the Chief Justice, especially by a friend of the prisoner, who was actually himself a Judge of Common Pleas, must have informed the quick-thoughted, keen-sighted Judge Parsons of the *peculiar circumstances* of the poor DEMOCRAT's case. How are we to account for this unfeeling neglect of a shrewd and useful man, of the class of our respectable yeomanry, the father of a large family, the cultivator and owner of a fine productive farm? Some have said that it was on account of the republican or democratic principles and conversation of the accused. But this could not be the whole cause, if any part of it. Leaving conjecture, let us state facts. Thomson and his *Lobelia* flourished from between the year 1800 and the time of his indictment and trial, which was in 1809, and his theatre of action was the county of Essex and that part of N. Hampshire, which borders on it. It was remarked that those of the jury whom he challenged were all federalists; and it was well known that priest-craft as well as doctor-craft were the butts of

This ridicule ; one of his printed addresses to the public begins by saying that there were three things which have, in a greater or less degree, called forth the attention of mankind, viz. *Religion*, *Government* and *MEDICINE* ; that these were once thought by millions to belong exclusively to three classes of men ; that the priests brought people to their own terms by keeping the scriptures locked up in a dead language ; but that those dark days are passed, or passing away, and that now each one reads the scriptures and judges for himself ; and that government once considered as belonging to a few—to men born only to rule, was now no longer “the grand secret,” but each one, amongst us, at least, knew that ALL men are born equal, and that magistrates are put into authority, and put out, by the vote of the people, while MEDICINE still lies concealed under a lumber of words and mystical nonsense ; so that a sick man is often obliged to risk his life where he would not risk a dollar, and what with, a very young and unexperienced doctor, the apothecary and the apothecary’s prentice, he too often receives an instrument of death instead of a remedy ; and that so long as fashion measured a man’s understanding and ability to benefit his fellow creatures by acquisitions in literature, from books made by erring man, instead of studying the *book of nature*, we should go on blundering to the end of the chapter. In a word, he impugned law, physic and divinity, and thereby excited the *odium theologicum*, the *odium medicum*, and the *odium politicum*. He was called to encounter “evil days and evil tongues, in darkness compass’d round and solitude.” In plainer terms, he lived and acted in times when character no longer depended on the tenor of a man’s life and actions, but was entirely determined by THE PARTY HE HAD TAKEN. To a man, who to the imputed knavery of empiricism, added the sin of republicanism, those were terrific times. In those days a corrosive spirit spread abroad tinging all three of the professions. Its breath was felt from the pulpit, from the bar, and sometimes the bench, nor was it excluded from the chambers of the sick. If it did not show its malignity on the indictment, arrest, imprisonment and trial of Thomson,

it certainly did on the REPORT of it. When speaking of his *novel practice*, the reporter says—"He (Thomson) came and ordered a large fire to be kindled to heat the room. He then placed the feet of the deceased, with his shoes off, *on a stove of hot coals*, and wrapt him in a thick blanket, covering his head." What a horrible idea of his practice does this convey! and how reprehensible the man who should thus misrepresent it? From this and similar exaggerations may have risen the stories spread about the country, that Dr. Thomson roasted young children like pigs, to obtain their fat for his incantations or remedies.

Here we see a benevolent man, endowed by nature with powers of mind, full equal, in my opinion, to those of the *reporter*, brought to trial for murder, and promptly acquitted ON THE VERY EVIDENCE ADDUCED FOR THE PROSECUTION, without any opportunity afforded him of uttering a word IN HIS OWN DEFENCE! As the Chief Justice knew that there was neither law nor evidence to criminate the prisoner at the bar, why give him so many back-handed strokes in the course of his charge? Why hint at *legislative interference* to make a law on purpose, and that unconstitutional, and against our own bill of rights? That part of his charge amounted in effect to this—you see, gentlemen of the jury, this *democratical* practitioner cannot be restrained from, now and then, disgracing our own made regular M. D's. either by the common or statute law; and there is no way to crush him unless you get the general court to make one on purpose for him, and such like "*impudent*" and "*ignorant empirics*;" and the learned judge took care to tuck into his report, by way of marginal note, an ordinance of our forefathers, by way of precedent.

O how have people, *in this most enlightened of all countries in the world*, been blinded and led away by *fashion* and rank *prejudice*, from the days of the Salem witchcraft to the downfall of our own *Essex Juntoism!*—Should any one have said the learned Dr. Thomson, and the ignorant Judge P. how would some folks have started and frowned! and yet let us bring things to the test, and cease our wonder. The Chief Justice told the jury

that Lovett lost his life by swallowing repeated doses of "INDIAN TOBACCO," for so he ignorantly calls the *Lobelia*, or *emetie weed*, and both Thacher and Bigelow have made the same blunder, besides pronouncing it an *annual* instead of a *biennial* plant. Let us hear what the "ignorant" and "impudent" Empiric himself has to say on this serious subject.

In p. 210 of S. Thomson's *materia medica*, for so it ought to be denominated, he says—"This herb is described in Thacher's Dispensatory under the names of *Lobelia Inflata*—*Lobelia Emetica*—*Emetic weed*, and *INDIAN TOBACCO*, and several other names have been given it, some by way of ridicule, and others for the purpose of creating a prejudice against it. Why it has had the name of *Indian Tobaceo*, I know not. There is a plant by that name which grows in this country; but it is entirely different from this herb (*LOBELIA*) both in appearance and medical virtues," and he adds, "in the *United States Pharmacopeia* there is directions for preparing the tincture of *INDIAN TOBACCO*, meaning *Lobelia*."—This is a cruel cut from the pen of an "ignorant" quack into that *lean* production, dignified by the high-sounding title of the *UNITED STATES Pharmacopeia*! If people will run upon snaggs in the dark, how can we help it, but by giving these occasional warnings.

Until the summer, we shall not venture to give the systematical description and sononyms of the plant called by some the Indian Tobacco; and shall only remark, at present, that it resembles some of the smaller varieties of the *nicotiana tabaeum*. Our country people call it the *itch plant*; because it is often made use of, in the form of decoction, to cure the itch. It puckers the skin, and if the decoction be too strong, or the skin very delicate, it is apt to excoriate it. The country people steep corn in it, with which they poison crows, and sometimes squirrels. It so stupefies these animals before death, that you may take them up in your hands. Now I do not believe that the Empiric Thomson would give a teaspoonful of the powder of *Indian Tobacco* to his worst enemy.

What a blessed privilege is the freedom of the press, when conducted with decorum, through the medium of

a newspaper! But for this, what a snarl of ignorance and oppression, as in the case before us, would have remained entangled in so many hard knots of ignorance, prejudice, and local party politics, and these perpetuated and confirmed by books presuming to be elementary works. May we not hope that these our rapidly written essays, in favor of common sense, fair play, and native genius, may induce a revision of some of the imposing productions of the day. The United States Pharmacopeia is too young and tender for much handling.—It is, I like to have said, an abortion, by which I mean, something that has come into the world *before its time*, an immature gestation. Time and patience will correct this. But what shall we say to *our* new Dispensatory? Nothing deserves more compassion than wrong conduct with good meaning. If Dr. T. would put his volume into a tolerable fine size, and reduce it one-quarter, or one-third, leaving out special references to local, and as much as may be, living authority, his compilation would be more respectable and useful. We seriously advise that worthy gentleman to a revision of the article of *Lobelia*, and that he have recourse to *experienced physicians* rather than learned divines, on articles of the *materia medica*. His article on *arsenic*, may be made less exceptionable and more consistent with that just mentioned. The very best books in the medical art are to be found among the *smallest*. What shall we say of the "*American Medical Botany*," where Thomson's *Emetic weed* is imperfectly described; and to which is added something very like a *libel* against that "*irregular*" practitioner. Thomson is an eccentric man, of character truly original, and of copious anecdote. Many stories are related of him, some true, and some false; to which class the following belongs we are unable to say. It is related that when Dr. T. was shewn the XIX. plate in the *American Medical Botany*, and was asked if he knew the plant? after viewing it a few moments, he said *yes*. The artist meant to represent my favorite *Lobelia*; but said he, it makes me think of the three wooden images in the front of Timothy Dexter's house in Newburyport; every spectator knows that they were

cut out, and painted to represent MEN ; but no one could have guessed that one was intended to represent Washington—the other Jefferson, and the third Adams.

With what different eyes do differently instructed men view the same natural object ! Where one sees a weed, another sees a wonderful organized being, resembling in every part an animal, both in its form and in its economy constituting a link in that astonishing chain of beings, rising gradually and insensibly, from the senseless clod, through all the varieties of shapes, shades, powers and faculties, up to the brightest genius of the human kind ! There are diversities of gifts, as well as tastes, and that consideration should induce us to bear and forbear with one another, as far as the mental powers are concerned—when honestly exercised.

#### AN ECCLECTIC.

P. S.—In the last of our numbers something was hinted as if the hero of them had been miserably *duped* by a treacherous friend. From what we can gather from the publications, and we make no assertions beyond them, we learn that T. led by his opinion of the talents, learning and sanctimony of the Rev. Elias Smith, put his manuscript into his hands, containing a narrative of his life—his *materia medica*, and every valuable particular of his *new mode of practice*, for Smith to arrange it, and express it in language fit for the public eye, and general and diffusive usefulness. It appears that S. engaged to do this for 40 cents a page ; but instead of accomplishing it, he laid himself out for practising on T's. discoveries, and which he pretended were improvements. The preceptor was unwearied in teaching his *scribe* all that he knew, as they lived together, and this the latter contrived to drag on **FOUR YEARS !** and at length the book came out ; but in place of bearing the name of S. Thomson, Botanist, it bore the name of Elias Smith, PHYSICIAN !! and what was still more audacious, S. took out the copyright in his *own* name. The whole transaction is already in two or three pamphlets. As far as Thomson's facts go, it is respectable, but beyond them, S's. *Medical Packet-book* is, perhaps, the most contemptible publica-

tion relative to physic, that ever issued from the press in any country, and yet a great many have been sold to the disgrace and manifest injury of the honest, liberal-minded Thomson. Let those who have extenuated and even vindicated E. S. turn these things over in their minds before they are one month older!

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## LETTERS.

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To Dr. John Thomson.

NEW-YORK, 18th Dec. 1824.

SIR—

I remember very well that about the 5th November you called upon me, in company with Dr. Everett, and presented me a copy of your father's "*New Guide to Health*," with a narrative of his life and discoveries.

I consider biography as one of the most entertaining and instructive branches of history; and that of Dr. Samuel Thomson especially worthy of being read by medical men. I congratulate him on his escape from the trials and difficulties in which he has been involved, and on retaining the animated front and features, exhibited in Mr. Williams' portrait of him. I hope that he may long continue to enjoy the rewards of good service, the *quantum meruit*, and the *mens sibi conscientia recti*.

The Flora of North America is astonishingly rich in remedies. There is no doubt in my mind, that in more diseases than is generally acknowledged, vegetable simples are the preferable remedies. Who knows, but in time, these native productions of the field and forest, will so enlarge and confirm their dominion, as to supersede the employment of other medicines.

Be kind enough to accept the assurance of my esteem and regard; and when you write to Dr. W. Ingalls, to present him my compliments.

SAMUEL L. MITCHELL.

To Dr. John Thomson.

NEW-YORK, Dec. 8th, 1825.

SIR—

The object, as I understand, which you had in view, when you submitted to me this afternoon, sixteen written certificates and three printed ones, in favour of your father's skill and practice, was to obtain my favourable opinion, with a testimonial of the same.

It was very agreeable to learn, that among other diseases, *consumption*, *croup*, *nervous headache*, *dyspepsia*, *fever*, *injury of the back*, *gravel*, *dropsy*, *delicate health*, *liver complaint* and *rheumatism*, had been removed by the prescriptions of Samuel Thomson. Not having witnessed the symptoms, nor attended to the operation of the medicines in any of the cases, I can only judge of them from the several statements made. If it is intended to make known, to the citizens at large, the doctor's success and eminence, I should think the best method would be to distribute them extensively in a pamphlet, as has been done by others in similar circumstances.—The people will then be enabled to judge for themselves.

On the controverted points among professional men and others, concerning quackery, mal-practice, and priority of discovery, I do not conceive it needful for me to give a judgment. The great matter is to alleviate human suffering; and in this I wish the author of the treatment by Lobelia and Capsicum, may continue to be serviceable.

With the return of the papers you left with me, I beg you to accept my cordial salutation.

SAMUEL L. MITCHILL.

*Extracts of Letters from Dr. David Morrill, of Union Village, (Ohio,) to Dr. Thomson.*

[His competency to form correct views of the subject, will appear by his own statement; and his opinions are so well expressed, that they were thought worth preserving.]

" As I desire to form some acquaintance with you, it will be proper in the first place to give some information

in relation to myself. I moved to this state about thirty-four years ago, from the state of New Jersey, the place of my nativity. I am now nearly sixty years of age. In the early part of my life, I practised physic, having been regularly educated in that profession while young.

"For the last twenty years I have been engaged principally in horticulture, having given up the practice under a conviction of the impropriety of administering poison instead of medicine. I have lately become acquainted with one of your agents, and from him I have purchased a right to practice under your patent. The principles which you have laid down in your pamphlet, appear to me to be the most rational and consistent thing, which has ever reached my knowledge, in relation to the healing art. I have an ardent desire to be as useful as possible to my fellow men, and therefore I earnestly solicit your aid and teaching.

"Any information which you might think proper to communicate, would confer a lasting obligation on me, and might in the issue be a real benefit and lasting blessing to this western world.

"It would be a satisfaction to know how the work is prospering in the East, and what prospect there is of defeating this limb of Anti-Christ.

"In the west we are doing our best to defeat the beast, and in this quarter there are already some hundreds who have wholly rejected the use of poisonous medicines."

"I am now about 60 years of age, and it is too late in the day for me to commence any great career of practice; but having examined the principle upon which your system is founded, with care and attention, and being confident of its utility, my principal object is to give the thing a solid root among a little circle of my particular friends, that its usefulness in time to come, may be more fully known. I have the most certain evidence to believe that the time is coming and now is when God will utterly supplant, root out, and destroy from the face of the earth, all doctor craft: and I firmly believe the new system of

vegetable medicine (notwithstanding the opposition it meets with at present from the advocates for poison) will yet prove a battle-axe, that will hew down the tall cedars of America, and extend its influence across the Atlantic to the old world, and bear down all opposition, till the whole craft is annihilated. I have found a little narrow track, that I feel well satisfied with; which is to be an honest man, and do those things, and those only, that my conscience justifies me in. I find daily peace in my present manner of going, and shall never change it for any human invented system on earth."

DAVID MORRILL.

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## CERTIFICATES.

### TO THE PUBLIC.

Having in the fore part of this pamphlet given a sketch of the theoretical part of this system, it is now thought advisable to present to the public some evidences of its practical utility. The effects will be displayed, it is hoped, to the satisfaction of every unbiased mind, by the following unequivocal testimonials of the individuals who have been benefitted by it, and who have witnessed its healing influence on others. It may be proper to remark, that the patients whom I have been called to attend, were generally such as had been abandoned by the regular physicians; and the success which I have had in restoring them to health, will, by the statements subjoined, most clearly appear. It cannot but be acknowledged that I have not had a fair chance with my opponents by reason of the hopeless situation of my patients.

The subscriber takes this opportunity of returning his thanks to the individuals who have so kindly furnished him with the following certificates, thus enabling him more effectually to combat the envious aspersions of his enemies, many of them having been furnished without the least solicitation whatever.

JOHN THOMSON.

BOSTON, April 2d, 1825.

This certifies, that the preparing and compounding the medicine in manner described in the patent, and administering them to cure diseases, which Dr. Thomson claims as his own invention, I believe to be new and useful.

WILLIAM INGALLS, M. D.

ALBANY, Dec. 14, 1825.

This may certify that I have abundant reason to believe that Dr. Thomson's system of botanical practice is superior to all others which have ever been applied in my family, even in the most obstinate cases: and where the efforts of regular physicians have totally failed. I have also witnessed, in other cases, the beneficial effects of this invaluable medicine, where apothecary medicines have proved wholly useless.—I believe it the most valuable and safe medicine that can be used in a family, and that a more general knowledge of its virtues would be an incalculable benefit to mankind.

JONAH SCOVEL,  
No. 124 State-street,

ALBANY, Dec. 15, 1825.

This may certify that I have been in possession of Dr. Thomson's system of medical practice for more than two years, during which time I have repeatedly administered his principal medicines, both to myself and family; and from its innocent and salutary effects I am constrained to give it the decided preference over any mineral medicine that has (to my knowledge) been made use of in my family. I believe it well calculated to promote health, and apparently to prolong the lives of the human family.

HORACE MEACHAM,  
No. 33 Maiden Lane.

ALBANY, Oct. 23, 1825.

This may certify that I have been afflicted with ulcers in my left side, dyspepsia\* and dropsy, and a complication of distressing complaints too numerous to mention. Four years I had gradually declined, often seeking relief from medical assistance, and as often obliged to hear the painful reiteration that my diseases were incurable. At length my whole system became so disorganized that I could neither eat, drink, sleep, nor enjoy in any degree the comforts of this life.—Having, therefore, given up all hopes of recovery, and daily expecting to bid adieu to all that earth holds dear, Dr. John Thomson came to this city, and having had some previous knowledge of his botanical profession, to him I made speedy application, hoping that he might produce something that would give a temporary relief. Accordingly,

\* Many other cases of this complaint have been cured, but the size of this book will not admit of their being noticed. I never have failed where I have had the first attendance.

J. T.

on the 10th day of October, 1824, he commenced his attendance, and in the short space of ten days I was reduced, in size, ten inches, could lie down on my left side and rest quietly, which I had not been able to do in two years before. I have continued to improve in health ever since, so far that I enjoy my food and repose in a very good degree; believing the dropsy to be totally eradicated, dyspepsia cured, the ulcers healed, and the cause principally removed. It is true that I am not as strong, and cannot endure fatigue or hardship as well as I could before I was sick, but whenever I take cold, or from any other cause begin to feel any pain or disquietude in my side or stomach, the medicine which I have heretofore made use of is sure to prove efficacious. I therefore feel a disposition to recommend Dr. Thomson's medicine and practice to all, believing it, from my own experience, to be good, and salutary in removing all kinds of diseases with which the human family is afflicted.

SARAH SCOVEL,  
No. 126 State-street.

The above statement, in regard to my wife's case, is correct.

JONAH SCOVEL, Jun.

BERN, Nov. 29, 1825.

This may certify that my son-in-law was taken with the rheumatism, three years ago, and was attended by three of the most eminent physicians in our quarter, to no advantage. I at last had given up the hope of his ever getting any better. When Dr. Thomson came to Albany, I applied to him, and my son-in-law found immediate relief. I have witnessed its success in many other violent attacks of disease where I think the patients must have died had I not been acquainted with Dr. Thomson's medicine and system of practice. I am decidedly of opinion that his medicine is the best that can be made use of in a family. I would, therefore, respectfully recommend to the public in general, to throw aside the mask of prejudice, as I have done, and at least, become acquainted with the virtues of these invaluable medicines.

STEPHEN WILLES,  
Late member of the Assembly.

ALBANY, September 1st, 1825.

This may certify that I have been complaining with the gravel for nearly six years, and I was in very great distress for the principal part of that time. In addition to this distressing complaint, I had the liver complaint and dyspepsia very bad. The first mentioned disease continued to grow worse, (notwithstanding I had the attendance of eleven regular physicians, who were eminent in their profession,) in so much that I was confined to my bed nineteen months, and for seven months was obliged to submit to the most painful instrumental operations.

The distress I underwent at times is more easily imagined than described. My limbs were so contracted from the tortures of my complaints that I had not walked a step in nine months: and as I was placed in bed so I had to remain until I was removed by my attendants, (being perfectly helpless,) from one side to the other. I had entirely lost the use of my system below the pit of the stomach—my head and hands I could use. My physicians had given me over to die, and indeed I was of the opinion myself that I could not live long, when I heard of Dr. Thomson, and at the request of my friends he came to see me, and administered his medicine; since which I have not undergone but one instrumental operation. I continued to improve in health so much, that when Dr. Thomson discontinued his attendance, I was able to earn my living by my own industry, and capable of going about town, which I altogether ascribe to the beneficial effects of his useful medicine.

LAURA CROSS,  
No. 67 Beaver-street.

The truth of the above statement can be substantiated, if necessary, by many of the most respectable people of this city. J. T.

ALBANY, August 31st, 1825.

This will certify that our infant child was taken with the croup last December. We employed a physician, and notwithstanding his unrewarded exertions to relieve the child it continued to grow worse, in so much, that the day previous to our sending for Dr. Thomson, both ourselves and neighbours had despaired of its recovery, and did not think it would live six hours. Its lungs were so badly affected and its stomach so much swollen that its breath had become nearly extinct.—Dr. Thomson came and prescribed to so good effect that the child now enjoys good health, which was far beyond our expectations at the time.

G. V. S. HOFFMAN,  
SARAH HOFFMAN,  
No. 123 North Market-street,

ALBANY, Oct. 29th, 1825.

This may certify that I have had various kinds of sickness in my family, and have been in the habit of employing the first physicians of skill and experience in this city, until the year past, when I became acquainted with Dr. Thomson's system of practice, and can say with propriety, that I have seen the most salutary effects from the use of his medicine. One case in particular is worthy of being mentioned. A young man had been badly poisoned with an India nut; he was almost in a state of mortification; but was rescued from this perilous situation by following the prescriptions of Dr. Thomson. I consider his system as the most useful of any extant; and I am confident that every one will agree with me who has proved it as far as I have.

C. B. SMITH,  
Corner of North Pearl-street and Maiden Lane;

ALBANY, Nov. 3d, 1825.

This may certify that I have been troubled from my youth with various complaints; they have seriously afflicted me for several years past. I applied to seven physicians, by whom I was attended separately, for a long time, to no advantage. I at last despaired of ever recovering, until Dr. Thomson came into the place, when I thought I would make one effort more, knowing his system of practice to be botanical. I sent for him. He attended about one week, from which attendance I received so much benefit that I bought a patent right, and have made use of the medicine occasionally, and I now enjoy better health than I have done before in twenty years. I think his system of practice superior to all others which I have made use of in my family, and as such place my signature to state its utility.

TIMOTHY GLADDING,  
No. 79 State-street.

N. B.—I am acquainted with most of the articles in this system of practice, and believe they can be used with perfect safety by the people at large, knowing them to be harmless.

ALBANY, Nov. 4th, 1825.

This may certify that one of our children was taken sick, and we employed one of the first physicians in this city; but notwithstanding his unwearied exertions to relieve the child, it died in one week after. The second was taken ill. Its complaints seemed to baffle the skill of the physician—it lingered some length of time and died likewise.—The third, and last, being taken more violently than either of the former, we thought it best to try some other remedies. We accordingly sent for Dr. Thomson, who came, and relieved the child immediately, which was more than we expected, or could expect from the violence of the disease and the effect the apothecary's remedies had on our other children. The child has had several serious attacks of disease since, which Dr. Thomson's medicine has proved equally efficacious in removing. Accordingly, we think the system superior to all others which we have had recourse to, and as such lend our names to vindicate its utility.

NATH'L. WHITE,  
ELIZABETH WHITE,  
No. 16 Hamilton-street.

ALBANY, Dec. 17, 1825.

Dear Sir,

In answer to your inquiry, whether I have been benefitted by the use of your medicines? I will briefly state, that having been for more than ten years under the necessity at times of taking more or less medicine to obviate the effects of indigestion, I have, for the last three months employed your prescription for that purpose, and from the benefit already experienced, am induced to believe it may effect a cure.

Yours, &amp;c.

B. D. PACKARD.

Dr. J. THOMSON.

No. 71 State-street.

ALBANY, November, 1825.

This may certify that my little daughter received an injury in her back when two years of age, and notwithstanding she was attended by two of our most skillful physicians she continued to grow worse.— She lost the use of her limbs, her health was very bad, her pain and distress was so great as almost to deprive her of any rest. In that situation they pronounced her incurable. We then applied to Dr. Thomson; he attended, and in one month's time her pain was entirely removed, and her health completely restored.

I likewise became possessed of a family right, and have administered the medicine on various occasions, and have invariably found it to have the desired effect. I am much pleased with the system of practice, and can cheerfully recommend it to my fellow-citizens as being the most safe and salutary remedies I have ever applied, and in vindication of which I hereby place my signature.

ALEX'R. MC HARG,  
No. 479 South Market-street.

ALBANY, October 25th, 1825.

This may certify that I have been afflicted for twelve years past with consumptive complaints, and have had the advice and attendance of six regular physicians, from whom I have received no relief, and at last was so reduced that I did not expect to live, which was the general opinion of people who saw me. At this critical moment I applied to Dr. Thomson, and was relieved immediately. This was about the first of August last, and I now enjoy better health than I have before in eight years.

My daughter had been afflicted for five years with a *polypus* in her nose. For three years the left side had been entirely closed, and she suffered excruciating distress for the greater part of the time. I applied to one of the first physicians in this city. He gave her some snuff, which had no effect. He then said she must have it extracted with *hooks*; but having seen one person who had suffered all of the inside of his nose to be pulled out, it made me shrink at the distressing thought. I was at length relieved of all these dreadful anticipations by Dr. Thomson's making a *perfect cure* of it, in *two weeks*, without distressing her in the least.

PETER BAUDER,  
No. 5 Pine-street.

SARATOGA SPRINGS, Nov. 10, 1825.

This may certify that I had been complaining for seven years; my complaints were of such a nature as to distress my stomach and head very much. I had applied to 4 physicians in our county to no advantage, being unable to work, and I at last despaired of ever recovering, when I heard of Dr. Thomson, in Albany. To him I made speedy application, and was relieved in one week. In a month I was better than I had been in six years, and am now able to do considerable labor. I have likewise used the medicine in my family in several cases, and find it superior to any that I have ever made use of before.

GIDEON CONANT.

ALBANY, October 25, 1825.

This may certify that I have experienced immediate relief in various complaints by the use of Dr. Thomson's medicine, particularly in the nervous headach, colic and ague. It has been very useful in my family for the diseases common to the climate. Many of my friends and acquaintances have made use of his medicine while boarding with me. Two cases of long standing I was witness to. The first was Mrs. Gidevan, from the city of New-York. She told me that she had been attended to by thirty-four of the first physicians in that city, and that they had generally given her up to die of consumption. Having heard of Dr. Thomson, she came to Albany, and commenced taking his medicine. For the first 10 or 12 days she appeared to improve, but was subject to violent fits. In the course of 4 weeks, however, they were cured; and she was enabled to return to New-York in better health than she had been for eight years before. The second case was that of a Mr. McDonald, from Cornwall, Upper Canada. His complaint was rheumatism in the head. He said he had been attended by four of the first physicians in Montreal, without experiencing the least relief from bleeding or blistering, the usual remedies in such a case. He then sought relief from the use of the waters at Saratoga Springs; but was not benefitted. He there met with a friend who advised him to repair to Albany and try Dr. Thomson's medicine. He has used it, and was entirely relieved of his complaint in the short space of 13 days.

WILLIAM BISSELL,  
No. 23 Pine-street.

Having heard of the case of Mrs. Gidevan, I called to see her, and what she told me was in substance the same as the statement given by Mr. Bissell.

PETER BAUDER.

ALBANY, Nov. 3, 1825.

This may certify that my wife had been in a weak state of health for five years. She had the advice and attendance of two able physicians to little or no advantage. Her complaint appear'd to be consumption, consequently it was thought of little service to doctor, until the last winter, when Dr. Thomson came to this place, attended and cured my brother's wife, after all other medicines had failed. She then applied to him. He attended her one week, and placed her in a better state of health than she had enjoyed for five years before. I also, had a daughter apparently in a consumption, she had a violent cough, and was much emaciated. She was restored to health very soon.— Besides many other violent attacks of disease, which his medicine has proved equally efficacious in removing. I believe it to be a valuable medicine, the beneficial effects of which no one is so sensible as those who have experienced the failure of other medicines and have been restored by this, as has been my family.

JARED SCOVEL,  
136 State-strect.

I certify the above statement of facts, to be correct.

MELINDA SCOVEL.

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ALBANY, 31st October, 1825.

Dr. THOMSON,

*Sir*—Having a desire to be as instrumental as possible in relieving my fellow sufferers, in time of distress, I send you this my certificate, which you may make public if you think proper, showing that you was the means, with the assistance of a kind providence, in relieving me, who but a short time since was lying on a bed of sickness.

For a number of years past I had been in very delicate health, in so much that I scarcely knew what it was to enjoy a well day.— My case growing worse daily, I called several of our physicians, who attended on me punctually, but to no purpose. I was reduced to such a state that I could not be raised in any way to receive nourishment, without fainting. I gave up all hopes of ever recovering—this was likewise the opinion of my attendants. At this critical juncture I was called on by a friend who persuaded me to try Dr. Thomson, who, he said, had done a great deal of good in this city, in restoring many persons to health who were in as bad a situation as I was, if not worse. Willing to try every effort, though with little hope, I sent for him.— When he came he expressed an opinion that I was dying, or very near death. I asked him if he thought he could afford me any relief; he answered me, that he would make a trial, if I would dismiss the physicians who then attended me. I did so. He commenced with his practice, and in the course of twenty-four hours, I was, to my great surprise and the surprise of those who attended me, much better than I had been for four weeks previous. He attended me very punctually for six days; and my old complaint, which had hung on me for several years, was entirely removed; after this he administered to me medicine to remove the pains in my breast, which had so good an effect as perfectly to relieve me. Several of my acquaintances have been relieved in the same extraordinary manner through the means of those medicines, after the failure of apothecary remedies. The value I place upon such practice can be more easily imagined than described.

ELIZABETH REYNOLDS,

No. 17 Van Schaick-street.

ALBANY, October 31, 1825.

This may certify that I have been afflicted about two years with the very troublesome disorder termed scrofula humour. I applied to the most eminent physicians of this city, but to no effect. I was finally persuaded to try the skill of Dr. Thomson, who had just arrived in this place, and to my great satisfaction and surprise in a short time was entirely relieved, and am now enjoying the most perfect health.

MARGARET ANN LINACRE,

No. 281 North Market-street.

ALBANY, Dec. 17, 1825.

Having witnessed the salutary effects of Dr. Thomson's medicine, in various cases where the regular physicians had made a fair trial to no advantage, I am decidedly of the opinion that it is far the best medicine that can be used in a family, and that a more general knowledge of its virtues would be a blessing to mankind.

E. B. HUBBARD,

No. 22 Hudson-street.

ALBANY, Nov. 30, 1825.

This is to certify that some time in March last I purchased a right to the use of Dr. Samuel Thomson's medicine, and from the use that I have made of them in my family, and the effect I have seen of them on others, (particularly those medicines I consider the most powerful, of which I have made considerable use,) I think I may with safety say to my friends they are not in the least dangerous, but perfectly safe, and in many cases very useful.

JOHN GARNSEY,  
No. 459 South Market-street.

ALBANY, Nov. 15th, 1825.

This may certify that Dr. Thomson's system of practice of medicine has proved itself superior to all other remedies which I have applied to relieve a severe distress in my side and stomach, which complaint I had been afflicted with for four years, and as such, place my signature to support its usefulness.

G. W. WINNE,  
No. 44 State-street.

ALBANY, Nov. 26th, 1825.

From experience I can certify that Dr. Thomson's medicine and system of practice are superior to all other remedies that have been in various cases applied in our family. My sister, who is of a consumptive habit, I have every reason to believe would now have been in her grave, had it not been for his useful medicine.

SAMUEL WILSON,  
No. 110 Washington-street.

Having had some knowledge of the virtues and medical qualities of Dr. Thomson's medicine and practice, I, with the utmost confidence place my name with those who believe his practice of medicine to be altogether superior to the regular practice.

JOHN WILSON.

ALBANY, Nov. 1st, 1825.

This may certify that I have employed Dr. Thomson, as a physician, in my family, for a short time, from whose attendance both myself and wife have received much benefit. She has not enjoyed her health so well in 12 months. In acute disorders his medicine has proved itself superior to all other remedies which I have ever seen or heard of.— My wife was taken with the cholera morbus, and was in great distress from Friday night till the next Monday morning, and could find no relief, when she sent for Dr. Thomson. His medicine relieved her in about 30 minutes, and by 12 o'clock she was enabled to attend to her business. I have never heard of a person being relieved so soon of this distressing complaint, and think I have abundant reason to prize his invaluable remedies.

DANIEL ADAMS,  
No. 121 State-street.

ALBANY, Nov. 14, 1825.

This may certify that we have been among unbelievers of the most obstinate kind in regard to Dr. Thomson's system of practice, and should have willingly kept so, had not pure necessity, after the failure of mineral medicine, compelled us to apply to him. We can say with confidence, that we never have had the consolation of seeing our family relieved so suddenly from violent attacks of disease, (of which they have had many,) under the administration of regular physicians, as we have had under the care of Dr. Thomson. He has attended our family in various violent attacks of fever, rheumatism and diarrhoea, which he has removed to our astonishment, so much so, that we cheerfully state, that we believe Dr. Thomson's system of practice to be superior to all other remedies which we have applied in our family, and as such, give our signatures to vindicate its cause.

DANIEL W. TALLCOTT,  
LOVICY TALLCOTT,  
106 Washington-street.

ALBANY, Oct. 27, 1825.

Experience has taught me that Dr. Thomson's system of practice is superior to all other remedies which I have applied to cure a consumption, which complaint, three regular physicians in Quebec pronounced me to have, and said that they knew of no remedy for me, excepting the West-India climate. Having a very bad cough and failing very fast, I was confident, without immediate assistance, I could not live long; accordingly I set out for the south, and when I arrived in Albany, was recommended to try Dr. Thomson, who relieved me immediately, so that I was able to work at my trade, which I had not been able to do before he saw me, for six months. I have found his medicine to have no other than a beneficial effect both upon myself and many of my acquaintances.

JOHN GOLDER,  
33 Washington-street.

ALBANY, Oct. 25, 1825.

This may certify that I had been afflicted with the liver complaint and consumption, and was attended by two of the first physicians in this city, the most eminent of whom, told me, that if the calomel which he was then giving did not benefit me, I could not live over the month of March. This was in December, 1824. I continued to grow so much worse, that I was confined the greater part of the time to my bed, for two months; and it was the general opinion, that I was in a deep consumption, and that I could not continue but a short time. About this time Dr. Thomson was recommended to me, and was accordingly employed. The medicine which he administered gave me immediate relief, and I have enjoyed good health for the last six months.

The above is a correct statement as far as my recollection serves me.

ELIZABETH RUSSELL,  
133 Washington-street.

ALBANY, Nov. 1. 1825.

This may certify that I had been complaining with the dyspepsia for three years, and had the attendance and prescriptions of various physicians, but to no effect. I at last applied to Dr. John Thomson, from whom I have received more relief than from any other source, and think I should recommend it to my afflicted friends who may be so unfortunate as to be afflicted with this distressing complaint.

CAROLINE ALLEN,  
656 South Market-street.

The above, is a daughter of mine, and the account given by her, I believe to be correct.

HORACE ALLEN.

ALBANY, Nov. 5th, 1825.

This is to certify that I have been troubled with dyspepsia for nine years. My food distressed me so much that at times I could neither lay down nor take any kind of rest for twenty-four hours together.—I suffered so much from my food that I was compelled to abstain from eating, as much as possible. I applied to three physicians, but all to no purpose. The remedies they prescribed for me rather aggravated than relieved the distress. I concluded there was no help for me, until the last winter, when Dr. Thomson effected for me a final cure. I was likewise last winter thought to be in a deep consumption, was confined to my bed in consequence of the debility occasioned by a distressing cough, and did not myself, nor did my neighbors entertain an opinion that I could long survive. But by the use of Dr. Thomson's medicine (which I know to be the best I ever have made use of for the above mentioned complaints) I am once more restored to health.

SARAH GOODWIN,  
No. 67 South Pearl-street.

ALBANY, 14th Nov. 1825.

This may certify that there has been several severe attacks of disease in my family, and that I have employed five regular physicians, at various times, from whose attendance very little or no benefit was derived. My wife, in particular, was in a distressed situation for eight or ten years, and was attended by the most skillful physicians of our acquaintance, but found no relief. Last winter I employed Dr. Thomson. His prescriptions have had so happy an effect, that my wife, at this time, enjoys her health better than she has before in ten years.—I was so well pleased with the effect of the medicine on her, that I have made myself acquainted with his system of practice, and have witnessed its beneficial influence not only in my own family, but on other persons of the first respectability, who are ready to attest to the same. The medicine is perfectly harmless, and may be used with perfect safety by any reasonable person. I believe it to be, when properly used, superior to any remedy now in use.

JOSEPH BULL,  
No. — Hawk-street.

ALBANY, Oct. 24, 1825.

This may certify that my daughter took a violent cold in March, 1824, which had such an effect on her, as to produce a high degree of derangement. She was in a distressed situation for seven months, during which time we had the advice and attendance of two of the first physicians in this city, but to no advantage. I began to despair of her ever being any better. It was the public opinion that she soon would have the consumption. At this time Dr. Thomson was recommended as having relieved some who had been in a similar situation. I accordingly sent for him, and in twelve days he relieved her entirely—and I feel perfectly safe in recommending his system of practice to all, who may be thus afflicted. Various other violent attacks of disease with which she has been afflicted, have been immediately removed by this invaluable system of practice.

LUCY HANNA,  
No. 5 Montgomery-street.

The above is a niece of mine, and I believe her statement to be correct.

ELIJAH BRAINARD.

ALBANY, Dec. 19th, 1825.

This may certify that my wife had been troubled with a pain in her left breast for four years. During that time she had the attendance of three of our city physicians to no advantage. She at last gave up all hope of recovery from their prescriptions. Soon after this Dr. Thomson came to this city; she applied to him, and his medicine had so good an effect that the pain was removed in a very short time. She now enjoys her health better than she has for five years. The medicine having had such a beneficial effect on her, I was induced to purchase a family right. From what I have seen of the effects of the medicine, in various cases, I am led to believe it the best that can be used in a family. What renders the medicine more safe in the hands of the people at large is, that all deleterious vegetables and poisonous minerals are excluded from it.

NOAH LOUGEE,  
No. 469 South Market-street.

ALBANY, Dec. 2d, 1825.

From what experience has taught me I can certify Dr. Thomson's medicine has been of much more service to me in removing consumptive complaints from my system than any other medicines which I have taken. The benefits which I have experienced from the use of these valuable medicines, and the effects which I have observed them produce on others, induces me to believe them superior to the mineral medicine usually given by physicians. I also consider them the safest and most efficacious remedies which can be used in a family.

ELIZA PAUL,  
No. 33 Union-street.

The above statement in regard to my wife, I believe is correct.

NATH'L. PAUL,  
Pastor of the African Baptist Church, Albany.

ALBANY, Oct. 28, 1825.

This may certify that my family have been subject to much sickness at various times and I have employed six regular physicians, but we have never experienced such salutary relief from their prescriptions as we have in the year past from the use of Dr. Thomson's medicines, in colic, fever, dysentery and rheumatism. Our little daughter was taken with a bad cough, her appetite failed, her flesh became much wasted, her face, hands and feet became much swollen, and bore a yellowish aspect; and she had the appearance of a person in the last stage of a consumption. There was not one who saw her at this time, but what said she could not live long; but she was restored to health by the use of Dr. Thomson's medicine.

From what experience has taught me, I believe I shall make use of no other medicine in my family as long as Dr. Thomson's is accessible.

CHARLES WHITNEY,  
No. 60 Washington-street.

ALBANY, Nov. 29, 1825.

This may certify that my daughter was taken sick in Oct. 1824, with the bilious fever. We employed two of the first physicians in this city, but she continued to grow worse, in so much, that in February following she appeared to have a confirmed consumption, which symptoms were attended with a severe pain in her side and a violent cough, which had reduced her to a mere skeleton. In this critical situation, I sent for Dr. Thompson, when she began to mend in 48 hours after his attendance. Her cough and pain in the side left her, and now she enjoys good health, which was far beyond our expectation at that time. We think that Dr. Thomson's medicine is the best we have applied to our daughter for a consumption, which it was undoubtedly believed she had.

JOSEPH PEIRCE,  
IRENE PEIRCE,  
Patroon-street.

ALBANY, Nov. 3d, 1825.

Heretofore I have been among the disbelievers in the utility of Dr. Thomson's system of practice. Pure necessity at length obliged me to apply to him. I was violently attacked with the bilious colic, and was in so much distress that I could place myself in no position that would afford relief. I had been in this state for some length of time before I could persuade myself to call on Dr. Thomson. My excessive distress compelled me to go somewhere. Dr. T. living the nearest, I went to him in great agony, asked him if he could relieve me. He gave me medicine which relieved me in about ten minutes. I got rid of my prejudice with my pain. Since that time I have seen the good effects of his valuable medicine in many cases.

SAMUEL P. SMITH,  
No. 136 State-street.

ALBANY, Dec. 1, 1825.

This may certify that I have used Dr. Thomson's medicine in my family, in several cases, the year past, and the happy effects which it has produced, induces me to believe it the most valuable medicine that has ever been used in my family.

BENJAMIN HOFFMAN,  
No. 71 State-street.

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ALBANY, Oct. 28, 1825.

This may certify that my daughter was taken with the inflammatory rheumatism, and that I employed two of the first physicians in this city, but notwithstanding, she lay five weeks in the most agonizing distress before she found any relief. My son was taken with the same complaint, and worse at times before he got relief than my daughter was, when we applied to Dr. Thomson, who relieved him immediately.—This was on Teusday, and in three days he walked one mile, and the next week was able to work. When Dr. Thoinson first attended him, he was confined to his bed, his flesh was so sore that he could not bear to be moved in any way. I think there is a great contrast between the practice of Dr. Thomson and that of the rugular physicians in the treatment of the same complaint ; the former gave imnediate relief, the latter gave not a shadow of hope for five weeks. I can, therefore, recommend Dr. Thomson's practice as being the most salutary remedy that has ever been applied in my family, for this complaint.

THOMAS FITZSIMMONS,  
Arbor Hill.

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A man in this city, from some cause unknown, took a large dose of poison, at the time it was supposed to have been opium. A regular physician was sent for, who commenced by bleeding, which by suspending animation, had no other effect, than that of hastening him into violent spasms. He became perfectly insensible, his jaws being set and the muscular parts of his system much contracted ; and it was generally thought by those who saw him, that he could not live but a short time, when his wife sent for Dr. Thomson, who came and administered his medicine. In about fifteen minutes he spoke, and in four hours was perfectly clear of the poison. But instead of opium, as was supposed, he confessed he had taken a teaspoonful of arsenic [ratsbane.]

If necessary, abundant evidence of the truth of the above statement can be produced.

A SPECTATOR.  
123 State-street.

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The preceding testimonials were selected for publication from a vast number in the possession of the subscriber. They afford the most irrefragable evidence of the great utility of his practice, and are a fine comment on the attempts which have been made to stigmatize his exertions in the cause of humanity with the epithet of *quackery*.

J. THOMSON.

In addition to the preceding documents, (which are deemed sufficient to satisfy the most incredulous,) I have thought proper, in conclusion, to introduce a few certificates, from Nantucket, out of a great number in my possession, to shew that the virtues of my medicine have been justly appreciated elsewhere.

J. T.

NANTUCKET, Nov. 19th, 1822.

We the subscribers having made use of Dr. Thomson's medicine, in our families, to our satisfaction, do not hesitate to recommend it as superior to any we have heretofore made use of; and we have not known of any persons who have made a fair trial of the same, to disapprove of it. As Dr. B\*\*\*\*\* is solicitous to make it appear that the Lobelia is poison, we deem it our duty to counteract his attempt. As we have made use of the plant to our thorough satisfaction, and know it to be perfectly safe, particularly when taken with his other medicine, and given by a skillful hand, we cordially recommend it to the public as proper for complaints common to this climate.

NATHANIEL RAND,  
GARDNER COFFIN,  
GRAFTON GARDNER,  
ZOPHAR HADEN,  
ROB'T. COGGESHALL,  
ALEXANDER COFFIN,  
REUBEN WEEKS,  
ABRAHAM POLLARD,  
DAVID WORTH,  
JOHN B. NICHOLSON,

DAVID U. GILES,  
SILVANUS RUSSELL,  
GILES SANFORD,  
WILLIAM JOY,  
ZEBDIAL COFFIN,  
SAM'L. BURNELL,  
GEORGE MACY,  
CHRISTOPHER BURDICK,  
JOHN G. COFFIN,  
DAVID JOY, Jr.

Being acquainted with most of the signers of the preceding document, we certify that they are entitled to credit, as persons of respectability and moral probity.

STEPHEN BAILEY,  
*Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Nantucket.*

SIMEON BALCH,  
*Preceptor of the Academy.*

NANTUCKET, June 2d, 1823.

This is to inform all whom it may concern, (through which I hope many may be benefitted,) that Dr. John Thomson has practised in my family to my perfect satisfaction, and to the very great advantage of his patients. He has restored two of my family to perfect health, one of whom had the typhus fever, and the other the whooping cough, and whose lives were entirely despaired of by the physicians who were employed previously to Dr. Thomson.

JOHN G. COFFIN.

The following articles came to hand since that part of the work in which they should have been placed has been put to press. But they are so intimately connected with the subject that I am induced to insert them at the close of the work.

J. T.

*Copy of a letter from the celebrated Dr. Waterhouse, formerly Lecturer on Materia Medica in Cambridge University, to Samuel L. Mitchill, M. D. & L. L. D.*

CAMBRIDGE, Dec'r. 19th, 1825.

*My Dear Sir,*

Mr. alias Dr. Samuel Thomson, who has the honor of introducing the valuable *Lobelia* to use, and fully proved its efficacy and safety, will deliver you this. He has cured and relieved many of disorders, which others could not, without being a regular diplomatised physician, and dared to be a republican in a hot bed of federalism; for which he has been shamefully ill-treated, even to persecution.

I have aided and assisted Thomson from a firm belief that his novel practice has been beneficial to numbers, and that it may be placed among improvements. If he be a quack, he is a quack *suigeneris*, for he proclaims his mode and means. Had John Hunter, whom I well knew, been born and bred where Samuel Thomson was, he would have been just such another man; and had S. T. been thrown into the same society and associations as J. H. he would, in my opinion, been his equal, with probably a wider range of thought; but both men of talents, and originality of thought.

I am, indeed, so disgusted with learned quackery, that I take some interest in honest, humane and strong-minded empiricism; for it has done more for our art, in all ages and in all countries, than all the universities since the times of Charlemain. Where, for goodness sake, did Hippocrates study?—air, earth, and water—man, and his kindred vegetables—disease and death, and all casualties and concomitants of humanity, were the pages he studied—every thing that surrounds and nourishes us, were the objects of his attention and study. In a word, he read diligently and sagaciously the *Great Book of Nature*, instead of the little books of man, as Thomson has.

How came your Legislature to pass so unconstitutional an act as that called the *antiquack* law?—such as the Parliament of England would hardly have ventured on?—for *who will define quackery?*—Were I sufficiently acquainted with your excellent Governor Clinton, I would write to him on the subject. You New-Yorkers are half a

century behind us in *theological science*, but your quack bill looks as if you halted also in physic.

By what I have seen and learnt of Mr. Thomson, I wish him success, and the notice of the eminent and the liberal in the profession, and with this view I give him this rapidly-written letter to Dr. Mitchell, and am with an high degree of esteem and respect his

Steady friend,

BEN'J. WATERHOUSE.

## EMPIRICISM TRIUMPHANT!

Or Dr. SAMUEL THOMSON'S *Steaming Process*, practised  
by the "REGULARS," in Boston.

*Mr. Editor,*

In your paper of the 21st inst. I noticed, with pleasure, an advertisement of "*Medicated Vapour Baths*," as established in this city by *Dr. Reynolds*, and therein said to be "*a recent invention*" by *Mr. Charles Whitlaw, Botanist*, who has been patronised by the nobility and gentry in England in a remarkably liberal manner. This led me to turn to the second edition of *Samuel Thomson's narrative of his life and practice*, where I read as follows (between pp. 164 and 166.)

"It is a matter of much gratulation to me, and a balm for all my sufferings, that *my system of practice* is fast gaining ground in all parts of the country. A number of gentlemen, eminent for their scientific researches and usefulness in society, have become advocates for the cause; and although they may not be perfectly converted so as to give up all their former opinions, yet allow that the system is ingenious and philosophical, and that the practice is *new and useful*. In introducing *my new mode of practice* to the people of this country, I have never sought *the patronage of the great*, and the success it has met has been altogether owing to *its own merit*." A man by the name of *Whitlaw* has lately introduced what he calls "*his medicated vapour bath*."

"It seems that this *Mr. Whitlaw*, from what I can learn from his publications, about six years ago, went from this country to England and there introduced a new system of practice, and became celebrated in curing all kinds of scrofulous diseases of the glands by means of his method of *applying steam*, and the use of decoctions from *American Vegetables*. How he got his knowledge, or what first induced him to fix upon this plan, I know not; but it seems, as far as I can understand him, that *he has adopted my system of practice*, as far as he has been able to get a knowledge of it. He says something about gaining his knowledge from an *Indian* in this country; but this is too stale to require any notice."

"One of the great principles upon which *my system* is founded is, that all disease originates in obstructions in the glands, (obviously, to include the capillary system,) and if not removed, becomes scrofulous;

and that the only remedy is to remove the obstructions by *steam and other hot medicines*. And in all my practice, for nearly forty years, there has been nothing I have succeeded more completely in, than in the cure of *scrofulous complaints*."

"It appears that *Mr. Whitlaw* has met with great success in England, and that he has had the *support and patronage* of many of the first men in the kingdom, (and among them the *DUKE OF YORK*,) who have liberally contributed to the support of an *asylum* for the cure of the poor, and that his success has given universal satisfaction. And it also appears that he has met with abuse from the medical faculty, both there and in this country. This was to be expected, and is the best evidence of its utility."

"I feel no enmity towards those who are benefitting others by my discoveries; and it gives me much pleasure to think that I have been instrumental in introducing a *new system of medical practice*, by which I feel confident so much benefit will be derived, by diminishing, in a great measure, the sum of human misery. But I think those gentlemen who have gained any knowledge of my practice, for which I have suffered so much for introducing, (*see his narrative and JUDGE PARSON's report, in Tyng's collection*,) ought, in justice, to allow me *some credit for the discovery*."

It must be very satisfactory to our unassuming countryman, Thomson, to see his practice, with the improvements which *Whitlaw* has made in the *snug mode of conveying the steam*, spreading far and wide in England, and now establishing in Boston, after receiving the British *fiat*. Mr. Thomson used *hot stones* to raise his steam, as they could be easily obtained and at no expense, whereas a steaming apparatus would have been both costly and inconvenient in our remote country towns. But what will the *regular physicians* say to their brother *Reynolds*, in degrading the dignity of the *profession*, in adopting the practice of *QUACK Whitlaw*, who took the practice from *QUACK Thomson*, who was tried for his life, *sixteen years ago*, at *Salem*, for the very practice now *cried up in London*, and reflected back to Boston with no small eclat, and while his *poisonous plant LOBELIA*, is sold by the *Apothecaries*, in *powder* and in *tincture*, which they ignorantly call "*Indian tobacco*." How will the *learned MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY* get over this?

From all things and from what we have just seen in the *Eastport Sentinel*, respecting the "*ischiatric notch*" in the *Massachusetts General Hospital*, it would seem that *Doctor craft*, alias *Surgeon craft*, alias *bone-setting craft*, is in some danger. *Witch craft* has long since been shaken loose, and carried down the stream of time into the deep ocean of oblivion, and *Medical craft*, unless it hold on with all its claws, will go down there likewise.

PHILO-ECCLECTIC.



## **ADVERTISEMENT.**

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THE subscriber takes this opportunity to inform his friends and the public that he has removed from Mr. Scovel's to 140 State-street, where he will be happy to attend to the calls of those who may apply to him for assistance in his profession.

He would likewise advise the public that he is the only agent in this city for selling Dr. Thomson's patent medicine; James Gould's term of agency having long since expired; and as spurious compositions are offered for sale, and called Thomson's medicine, he has thought proper to caution the public against purchasing medicine under the name of Thomson's which is sold by any one except the subscriber.

As many persons have been very industrious in circulating scandalous stories respecting the subscriber's practice of medicine, he would esteem it a favour for persons hearing such falsehoods, to call on those concerned and most intimately acquainted with the circumstances, or on the subscriber, and be satisfied whether they are true or false.

**JOHN THOMSON,**  
**No. 140 State-street.**

*Albany, December, 1825.*